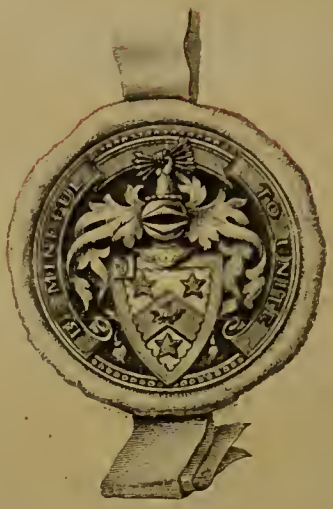

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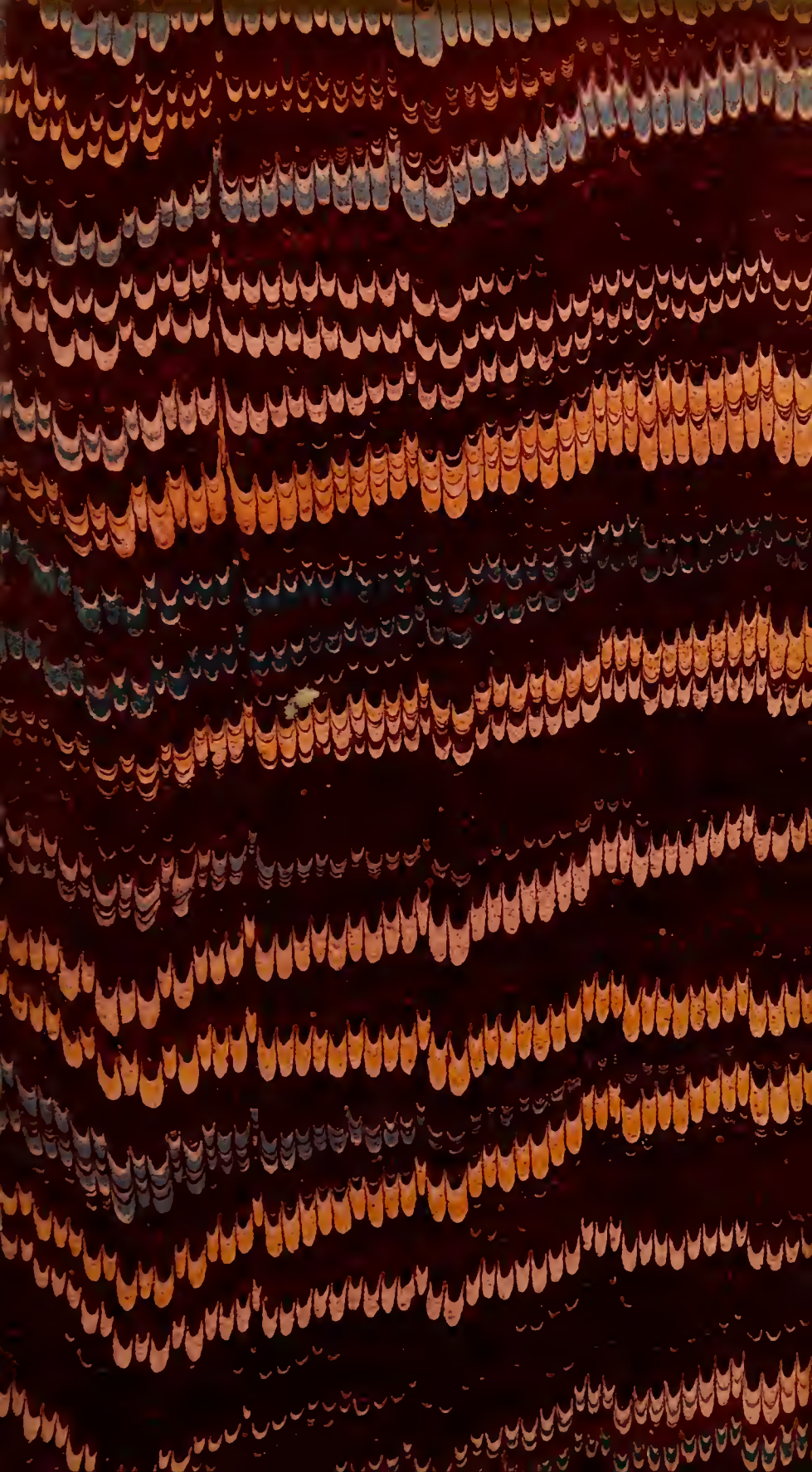

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HISTORY

OF THE

FEMALE SEX;

COMPRISING

A VIEW OF THE HABITS, MANNERS, AND INFLUENCE OF WOMEN, AMONG ALL NATIONS, FROM THE EARLIEST AGES TO THE PRESENT TIME.

Translated from the German of

C. MEINERS,

Counsellor of State to his Britannic Majesty, and Professor of Philosophy at the University of Gottingen.

BY FREDERIC SHOBERL.

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HISTORY

OF THE

FEMALE SEX.

CHAPTER I.

On the Public and Private Life of the Female Sex, in the Middle Ages.

The revolutions which took place during the sixteenth century in the condition of the female sex, were not less important than those which it produced in church and state, in religion, in the arts and sciences, in academical institutions, in commerce and manufactures, in the sentiments and manners of the most celebrated nations, in the mutual relations of the countries of Europe, and in the situation of the latter with regard to the other divisions of the globe. These changes cannot be duly

appreciated, except by those who are acquainted with the condition of the sex in the preceding centuries. When I committed to writing my ideas on the manners of both sexes, in the age of chivalry*, I had not yet consulted the original sources of information respecting the public and private life of the females of the middle ages; and had I even then completed those researches, I had probably reserved the result of them for an Introduction to this Second Volume, that the history of the sex in the sixteenth and seventeenth century might be rendered still more interesting and instructive, by the contrast with the description of its state before that period. My fair readers will certainly be no less astonished at what their sex formerly was, than at the revolutions, by means of which it has gradually become what it is at this present day. I am confident too, that they will neither desire the return of the good old times, as they have been denominated, nor wish to exchange the present age for any of the three that preceded it.

Among nations of different origin, the condition of the female sex principally depends on the natural qualities of the

* See Vol. I. c. 6.

heart and mind, by which each of them is distinguished. On the contrary, among nations of the same origin, such as the Germans, and all those that were either descended from, or conquered by the Germans, the state of the women is determined by the particular constitutions, customs, manners, and refinement of each nation, and also by the situation, power, and disposition of their sovereigns. As a great change took place in all these points, among the European nations, during the sixteenth century, so the condition of the sex underwent an equal revolution with the causes by which it is governed.

One of the principal causes of the peculiar situation of the female sex in the middle ages, was the mode of life which the kings and princes were compelled to adopt by the state of anarchy which pervaded their dominions. The sovereigns of former times possessed less real power than their later successors, though they committed acts of much greater violence. The superior clergy were everywhere independent of the secular power, or at least struggled to render themselves so. Though the higher ranks of nobles did not lay claim to the same independence, yet every duke, count, and baron thought himself

entitled to act in his domain, as if he was not accountable for his conduct to any superior. It was not rarely the case, that individual vassals were so powerful as to be able, without other assistance, to cope with their liege sovereign. So much the greater was their ascendency and the predominance of their power, when several, or perhaps all the principal vassals confederated against their common and rightful head. The very lowest of the nobility considered it as the inherent prerogative of their rank to invade the property of their neighbours, and plunder with impunity both natives and foreigners on the public roads. By these depredations the higher and lower orders of the nobles made the towns their enemies, and rendered them the natural allies of the sovereigns, who received from their steady and loyal cities the most effectual support against the superior power of their temporal and spiritual vassals. But the cities themselves adhered to their lords no longer than while the latter continued to augment their priviliges, or at least did not attempt to abridge those which they already possessed. On the most trivial violation of their rights, real or imaginary, the cities piquing themselves on the strength of their walls, their wealth, and the martial spirit of their inhabitants,

flew into open rebellion; and then the combined power of the princes, the clergy, and the nobles proved scarcely sufficient to reduce the insurgents to obedience. It was very seldom that the sovereign and his states were upon good terms, but even in case no misunderstanding subsisted between them, the states themselves were continually in open or secret warfare with each other; and the superior class of the nobility and clergy agreed in nothing but their oppression of the common people, whom they frequently drove, by the most shameful extortions, into formidable and fatal insurrections. Can it be surprizing, if, under such circumstances, the kings and princes of the middle ages were almost incessantly engaged in punishing or quelling rebellions, sometimes in one, and sometimes in another province of their dominions, in adjusting and preventing bloody or inveterate disputes; in frustrating dangerous confederations and conspiracies; in soothing the exasperated, and confirming the wavering? Domestic commotions and disturbances frequently occasioned tedious foreign wars, because each was ready to avail himself of the weakness or embarrassment of a neighbour to enforce obsolete claims, or to wreak upon him long deferred revenge.

The kings and great princes of the middle ages were therefore summoned continually, either in quality of supreme judges, or as the heads of their people, from one province and one extremity of their dominions to the other; so that their lives were a series of almost incessant peregrinations. So late as the fifteenth century, most of the emperors, kings, and great princes conducted their armies in person against their enemies, and in time of peace repaired from one province and city to another, for the purpose of administering justice and equity. Even in the sixteenth century, the emperors Maximilian and Charles V. and the kings Louis XII. Francis I. Henry II. and Henry IV. of France, together with most of the great German princes, imitated their ancestors in both these points.*

Not only the military expeditions, but also the journies of the kings and princes, during the whole of the middle ages, were attended with great and manifold dangers and fatigues. No European nation or sovereign had yet thought of constructing

* In France the military expeditions undertaken by the kings against either foreign or domestic enemies were denominated, till the middle of the seventeenth century, *voyages*. See *Mem. du Cardinal de Retz*, II. p. 75, 76.

durable and convenient roads. In the vicinity even of great capitals and commercial cities they were so bad, that no one could scarcely have conceived the idea of performing long journies in covered vehicles. Even when the state of the roads was greatly improved, kings and princes would have hesitated to be conveyed in carriages like women, since it was accounted disgraceful for a knight to quit his vigorous and spirited charger and to mount a more gentle and quiet animal.* The wretched roads of former times were also extremely dangerous, on account of the numerous bands of robbers, who frequently did not spare even princes and their retinue. Many rivers had either no bridges at all, or they were so weak and tottering, that travellers were often obliged to ford deep and impetuous torrents at the imminent hazard of their lives. The accommodations that were found by the way, excepting in towns and fortified castles, perfectly corresponded with the roads and bridges of the middle ages. Foreign invasions and domestic oppression laid waste the country to such a degree, that in the

* *Perceforest in La Palaye*, I. p. 49. Combien que à celui temps un chevalier ne pouvoit avoir plus grand blasme que de monter sus jument.

villages and small places, neither the prime necessaries of life, nor a secure and commodious lodging could be procured. All these fatigues and dangers, as well as the inclemencies of the weather and seasons, kings and princes were obliged to share with the meanest of their attendants. One of the few points in which the lords fared better than their servants on journies and in wars, was this, that they more rarely endured hunger and thirst, for they either caused provisions to be carried after them or appropriated in preference to their own use whatever they found in any place. It was therefore with justice that the courtiers and military attendants of kings and princes accounted the fatigues of travelling the greatest hardship imposed upon them by the service of the sovereign.* These hardships were so far from being diminished in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, that at the French court a general terror prevailed whenever it was understood that the monarch or his viceregent intended to make a circuit of the provinces.†

* See the complaints of the fifteenth century in the *Oper Æneæ Sylvii*, p. 733; or *Meiners Vergleichung des Mittelalters*, I. p. 250.

† See many passages in the *Mémoires de Sully*.

The kings and princes of former times could not expose their wives, their daughters, and their female attendants to the fatigues and dangers of tedious journies, which they, who were vigorous and experienced warriors, themselves dreaded; and for this reason it very seldom happened that princes were accompanied in these expeditions by their consorts. The common women alone were hardy or hardened enough to accompany the kings and princes in their journies and campaigns both on horseback and on foot. As these servants of the public pleasures carried on their licensed profession, under the protection of the laws, in every city during the whole of the middle ages,* so they were regarded as a necessary part of the retinue of kings and princes in their journies, and as an essential portion of the baggage of an army in war, and had their patrons and protectors at court and in the camp, as well as in the cities. St. Louis was perhaps the only king of the middle ages, who, though he tolerated public stews in his dominions,† yet most strictly prohibited them in his crusade to Egypt and the

* *Meiners Vergleichung des Mittelaters*, I. p. 264, 265.

† *Joinville Histoire de St. Louis*, p. 147. *edit. de Paris* 1761.

Holy Land, and punished the transgressors of this ordinance in such a manner that the punishment cannot fail to appear at the present day still more extraordinary than the evil which it was intended to remedy.* The predecessors and successors of St. Louis consoled themselves in the arms of the most beautiful courtezans for their separation from the wives and mistresses whom they had left behind them, and regarded these women, whose numbers frequently amounted to many hundreds, as their common harem.† As long as the governments of the sixteenth century tolerated brothels, and it was no disgrace to persons of the highest distinction, and even princes, to frequent those already dan-

* *Joinville*, p. 106. Tout premier vous dirons d'un chevalier, qui fut pris au bordel, au quel l'en parti un jeu selonc les usages du pays. Le jeu parti fu tel, ou que la ribaude le menoit par l'ost en chemise, une corde liée aux genetaires; ou il perdroit son cheval, et s'armeure, et le chaceroit l'en de l'ost. Le chevalier lessa son cheval au roy et s'armeure, et s'en alla de l'ost.

† The writers of the middle ages thought nothing of an army being accompanied by fifteen hundred prostitutes; and of kings seeking recreation in their society like the knights and common soldiers. These monarchs appeared to them to deserve censure only when they sometimes tricked out their favourite coutezans like princesses, when they introduced them into the company of illustrious and virtuous females, and exposed their own wives to the danger of giving public prostitutes the kiss of peace. See *St. Palaye*, II. p. 66.

gerous theatres of public incontinence, * so long it was customary for great numbers of women to accompany the kings in their journies and in war. During the diet of Worms, held by Charles V. all the streets of that city were filled with beautiful women, and ladies of easy virtue.† Not long afterwards, the army which the Duke of Alva conducted into the Netherlands was followed by four hundred courtezans on horseback, and eight hundred on foot.‡ In the cities of Spain and Italy, and in that of Rome in particular, the courtezans were more numerous, more accomplished and more opulent, than in any other country in Europe. The reason of this was, that in Spain and Italy, modest women and young females were more closely

* The Duke de Mayenne, in 1592, for the second time contracted the venereal disease, in a brothel at Paris, and in such a degree that in the sequel he was obliged by the bad state of his health to remain inactive under circumstances, in which activity would have been decisive in his favour. Etoile relates the occasion of the Duc de Mayenne's disorder, as an ordinary occurrence. "Le Duc de Mayenne s'etoit retiré en même tems à Rouen, pour se faire traiter une seconde fois du mal de Naples, qu'il avoit gagné quelque tems auparavant a l'hôtel de Karnavalet dans une débauche qui s'y fit. *Journal de Henry* IV. I. p. 224.

† *Meiners Vergleichung des Mittélalters* I. 326.

‡ See the Life of Cornelius Agrippa in *Meiners Lebensbeschreibungen*, Vol. I. p. 307, and almost all the works of Ulrich von Hütten.

confined, and the ecclesiastics, living in celibacy, were no where so numerous, so licentious, and so depraved. As the Italian courtezans had principally formed themselves after the model of the Greeks, they themselves became in their turn the patterns and instructors of the ladies of the court, first in Italy, and afterwards in other countries; not only in the science of dress, but also in all the voluptuous arts, by which the attractions that excite sensual passion are developed, heightened, and prolonged.*

While the dangers and hardships of journies and military expeditions accustomed the kings and princes of the middle ages to the pleasures of illicit love, estranged them from their rightful consorts, and prevented the faithful partners of their throne and bed from enjoying any permanent influence over the heart and conduct of sovereigns, they, at the same time proved an obstacle to the advancement of that class of females, so well known in modern times by the denomination of

* D'autresfois nos dames Francoises n'ont eté si belles ni si enrichies, comme elles sont aujourdhuy; mais il y a long tems que l'Italienne, l'Espagnole et la Grecque le sont. *Brantome, Dames Galantes,* I. p. 261.

mistresses; that is to say, of acknowledged concubines of the prince, who possess exclusively, or in a paramount degree the affections of their illustrious lovers, who though not admitted to participate in the prerogatives of their rank, yet share their treasures and their power, and avail themselves of the pernicious ascendency they have acquired, to interfere in the affairs of the court and of the state. The licentious commerce with courtezans, in which most of the princes of the middle ages indulged, was sufficient to stifle in their birth those passions by which mistresses are exalted and supported. What contributed still more to produce this effect, was the hardships and dangers incident to the irregular mode of life of the princes, which rendered the attendance of inseparable mistresses, and the gratification of their wishes almost impracticable. In the fifteenth century mistresses were kept only by the ecclesiastics who had a settled residence, and the temporal princes of Italy, but in particular by the popes, and governed in their palaces with unlimited sway. Mistresses are unknown in the history of the other active and warlike princes of the fifteenth century, with the single exception of Charles VII. of France. That monarch,

however, could not be numbered among the active and martial princes, except during a short period of his reign; for, after the death of the beautiful Agnes Sorel*, he sunk into all the effeminacy and voluptuousness of an Oriental despot slumbering in his harem.†

The frequent peregrinations of the princes, and their consequent separation from their wives, exposed even those who thought courtezans unworthy of their love, to the temptation of illicit connections.

* *Mezeray*, IV. 512. The celebrated Agnes Sorel was the precursor of all the mistresses, who, during the 16th, 17th, and 18th, century brought upon France such great and mainfold calamities. She was more high-spirited and more magnanimous, but not less proud than any of her successors, for she assumed an equality with the most illustrious princesses. See *Olivier de la Marche*, I. p. 143. "Le Roy avoit nouvellement eslevé une pauvre damoiselle, gentifemme, nommée Agnes de Sorel, et mis en telle triomphe, et tel pouvoir que son estat estoit à comparer aux grandes princesses du royaume."

† "It is said that Agnes died very young, by poison, after which the Damoiselle de Villecler governed the king as absolutely, or even more so, than her aunt had done. She had always three or four of the most beautiful females she could find, who accompanied the king whithersoever he went at his expence. Notwithstanding all this, and though the father, brother, uncle, and the Sieur de Jeuly were apprized of all that I have related, they sent Blanche thither; and before the Damoiselle Blanche had been long with the Damoiselle de Villecler, report proclaimed that she was very much in the favour and company of the king, and as much so as the Damoiselle de Villecler herself." *Mémoires de Jaques du Clercq*, ch. IV. p. 10.

At every castle, or in every city where they stopped, festivities were given in honour of the illustrious guests, and on those occasions the ladies of the house and neighbourhood, or the wives and daughters of the principal citizens were presented to them. From the universal corruption of morals it may be inferred, that the most beautiful females vied with each other in their efforts to attract the eyes of royal or princely lovers, and that those were accounted extremely fortunate, who enjoyed for ever so short a time the gracious notice of the sovereign.* To these gene-

* During the whole of the middle ages it was invariably observed, that in every city where popes, kings, or great princes had resided for some time, the morals of the sex became totally depraved. Thus Agrippa, speaking of Lyons, as early as the commencement of the 16th century, exclaims :---" Woe to the cities which the court chuses for its residence for any time, because it will infallibly leave an odious train behind. After its departure, some discover that their wives and daughters have been seduced, and others that their sons, domestics, and maid-servants have been debauched. I know a celebrated city of France which has been so utterly depraved by the court, that you can scarcely find in it one chaste wife or uncontaminated virgin. On the contrary, it is an honour to have been a court strumpet, and the elderly women are the procuresses of the younger. This licentious commerce is so common that people are not ashamed of it. Even husbands give themselves no concern whether their wives are guilty of adultery or not, if the price of their prostitution but procures them a competence.." *De Vanitate Scient.* ch. 78.

rally short-lived connections must be ascribed the phenomenon, that notwithstanding the princes of the middle ages seldom kept mistresses, in the modern acceptation of the term, they had commonly a much greater number of illegitimate children than those of their successors, who have been most notorious for their attachment to mistresses. Queens and princesses never complained of the infidelity of their husbands, till the latter began wholly to neglect them.* The historians recorded it indeed, as a remarkable circumstance, if a prince preserved his conjugal fidelity inviolate;† but they passed no censure even on good princes, if they availed themselves of what was then considered as the right of sovereigns and the great, and collected around them a nu-

* For instance, the wives of Charles VII. of France, and Philip the Good, of Burgundy, of whom Olivier de la Marche thus speaks: "These two princesses were already in years, and their beauty was on the wane; and I verily believe that they were afflicted with the same painful disease, which is called jealousy, and that they often conversed privately on the subject of their passion, which was the cause of their intimacy."

† The historian already quoted says, for example, of Charles the Bold, of Burgundy, that in his youth he had been a "bon compaignon avec les filles, car il n'étoit point marié; car lui marié ne rompit jamais son mariage."

merous train of illegitimate children.* The name of bastard, so far from being disgraceful, was on the contrary a title of honour, which the next illegitimate sons of princes assumed on the death of their elder brothers.† The bastards of princes could not indeed succeed to the throne or possessions of their fathers; but if they gained their affection, they were treated as the offspring of princes, and acknowledged by the children of the legitimate wives, as their brothers or sisters.

As much as the princes of ancient times differed in their mode of life from their more recent successors, so different was also the household of the former when quietly residing in their capitals from that of the latter. The household of the kings and princes of the middle ages, was be-

* Thus Olivier de la Marche says of Philip the Good, of Burgundy: "D'autre part le duc de Bourgogne fut de son tems le plus dameret, et le plus amoureux que l'on sceut, et avoit des batards et batardes une moult belle compagnie."

† When the eldest illegitimate son of Philip Duke of Burgundy was killed before Ghent, the younger who was before called Messire Anthoine, assumed the title of *Bastard de Bourgogne*. "Grand dueil" says Olivier de la Marche, "et grand regret fit le bon duc à part de son bastard que moult aimoit. Aussi fit le comte de Charolois et Messire Anthoine Bastard de Bourgogne son frere, et de la en avant ne fut plus appelé ledit Messire Anthoine par son nom, mais Bastard de Bourgogne seulement." I. p. 340.

yond comparison more limited, and the retinue of the rich nobles, or principal civil and military officers, much more numerous than the one or the other in modern times. The revenues of the monarchs were proportionably much smaller, and had they, even like most of the French kings of the thirteenth century, doubled or trebled them by the most cruel extortions, still the fruits of their violence were immediately absorbed by the retainers whom they kept in their pay, by the usurers who had advanced them money at exorbitant interest, and by the greedy instruments of their exactions. The rich barons and nobles, on the contrary, could not expend their revenues to better purpose than in the support of numerous dependents and servants, who gave them consequence in time of peace, and enabled them in war to chastise their foes, or by plunder to amass great riches. If no other documents existed, the regulations of St. Louis and of Philip the Fair, would be sufficient to demonstrate that the household of the French kings themselves, who, as early as those days were the models of most European sovereigns, was far inferior to that of the kings and

princes of the last ages.* As the palaces and gardens, the apartments, furniture, and decorations of the abodes of the princes of the middle ages were behind those of modern sovereigns; so also every class of their household was less numerous and respectable.† Exclusive of the four principal officers of the crown, the marshal of the household, the lord chamberlain, the grand cup-bearer and grand sewer, of whom no mention is made in the ordinances of St. Louis and Philip

* See *Du Cange Observations sur l'histoire de St. Louis* p. 108. The two ordinances mutually explain each other, for in that of St. Louis the salary of the attendants is almost always mentioned, and their number is stated in that of Philip the Fair. Compare with these a fragment of the *Etat de la maison de Charles VI. in Grand D'Aussi, Part* III. p. 299. See also the *Etat de la maison de Bourgogne* subjoined to the *Mémoires d'Olivier de la Marche,* and the *Honneurs de la Cour de Bourgogne* in *St. Palaye,* Vol. II. p. 171.

† In the *Ordinatio hospitii et familiæ Domini Regis, Ludovici sancti,* the household is divided into the following classes: *Camera, Panetaria, Scancionaria, Coquina, Fructuaria, Scutiferia, Fourreria.* In the *ordinnance pour hotel de Philippe le Bel* it is mentioned under these heads: *Paneterie, Eschançonnerie, Cuisine, Fruiterie, Escurie, Fourière, Clers, Hotoires, Fisiciens trois, Chappelains, Clers de Chapelle, Clers de Conseil, Surgiens deux, Chevaliers de l'Hotel.* It is astonishing with what precision, the salaries, the servants, the horses, the table, the beverage, the lodging, the fodder for the horses, or the sums allowed instead of those things are regulated with regard to all the officers of the household.

the Fair;* these monarchs, at least St. Louis, kept only four gentlemen of the bed-chamber, the same number of cup-bearers and equerries, and only three sewers or tasters, one for the king's table, and two for that of the attendants on the court.† The establishment of the kitchen was considerably more numerous than that of the stables and of the chace; and yet for the whole of it were kept only two waggons with four horses; and for the king's table a cart with three horses. To the stables belonged, exclusive of four equerries, two smiths, and their three assistants, four grooms, and one account-

* It would amply repay the trouble to enquire into the history of the gradual establishment of the courts of the European sovereigns and the most important changes which took place in them. The viscountess *de Furnes*, who toward the conclusion of the fifteenth century wrote *les honneurs de la Cour de Bourgogne*, spoke of the four principal officers of the court in the following terms: *Aussi les gentilhommes de telles maisons (de Rous, Ducqs, Princes, &c.) se peuvent appeller, l'un Echanson, l'autre Pannetier, l'autre Escuyer tranchant, et l'autre varlet servant.* From a comparison of the abovementioned domestic ordinances, it appears, that not only the titles, but also the number, rank, and salaries of the principal officers of the court differed exceedingly at various times, so lately as since the 13th century.

† *Du Cange p.* 112.---*un pour le Roy, et deux pour le commun.* In the household regulations of St. Louis and Philip the Fair, the king's table is always distinguished from *le commun*: but the latter is nowhere divided into the marshal's table, and that for the inferior attendants.

ant. Philip the Fair ordered that no more than six horses should be kept for those whom he might take with him to the chace.* Under the head of hunting establishment, I find mention only of one fowler, one wolf-huntsman, six falconers, three other huntsmen, one assistant, two archers, the same number of whippers-in, and nine couple of dogs. The first lords of the bed-chamber, cup-bearers and sewers had no more than six *sous* a day, but were allowed three servants, who ate at court, a certain quantity of wine every night, as many candles as they wanted, and fodder for three horses.† Yearly salaries were given only to a few of the inferior attendants. ‡ All the other officers of the household received a daily stipend, which was

* *Item, ordonné est que le Roy aura six coursiers pour ceux qui iront avec lui en bois, et pour son cors tant que il lui plaira* &c.

† *Cambellani amotis liberationibus suis,* (such was the term applied to the court-dresses, or liveries given once or twice a year to most of the royal household, the best of which were estimated, in the household regulations, at one hundred *sous,* while a good horse was valued, on the contrary, at sixteen *livres) quilibet sex sol. per diem et tres valetos comedentes ad curiam, et in sero dimidium sextarii vini, de candelâ unam torchiam per septem, etiam per quinque, aliam per quatuor; et* 12 *pecias candelæ minutæ, et fabricam ad tres equos.*

‡ For instance to the *Obliarius* and *Quatrigarius Panetariæ,* p. 109.

only paid them when upon actual duty.* Many of the principal attendants were not accustomed to eat at court, and very few had an apartment in the habitation of the monarch, or were permitted to sleep in the palace.† If the tables, apartments and beds of the French kings were as disgustingly filthy as Eneas Sylvius and even Ulrich von Hütten describe the tables, apartments, and beds in the palaces of their time to have been, those lost very little indeed who were allowed neither board nor lodging at the court of the sovereign.

The very mansions of the barons, and even of the gentry of the middle ages, resembled public inns, which knights and squires were incessantly entering and leaving, and where it was necessary to make provision for great numbers of noble guests. At the courts of kings and other

* This is expressly mentioned with respect to several of the officers of the court, especially the *Clers de conseil. Tous iceux nommés ne mangeront point à court, ou en parlement, et leurs manteaux, quant ils seront aux festes.* p. 115.

† *Le mestre de l'ostel, et le Mestre de l'ostel madame, Mons. Jean du Chastellet, n'auront point de chambre en l'ostel.* Immediately afterwards it is ordered that none of the 20 *valles*, or servants under the command of the *mestre de l'ostel* shall sleep in the palace.

potent princes, the concourse of people petitioning favours, or demanding justice, was so much the greater, as no tribunals were yet established either in the capital of the whole country, or in the chief towns of the provinces, for the administration of justice in the name of the sovereign. On the other hand, the courts of the princes of the middle ages were eclipsed, at least in pomp and splendour, by those of the past centuries; for not only the immediate attendants and servants of the court, but likewise the officers of the crown in the provinces, were much less numerous. Well-organized administrations, with their various bureaus and departments, replenished exchequers, tribunals of justice, regencies, consistories, and war-offices were either wholly or almost wholly unknown till toward the conclusion of the middle ages; and the business of these provincial colleges was performed by one, or by a very small number of persons. Louis XI. and his successors first began to imitate the example of different Italian princes, and when necessary to create new places both at court and in the provinces, and to extend and multiply those which previously existed, in order to raise large sums by

the sale of them.* The system of increasing the number of these places was also adopted by those princes who did not think fit to dispose of the new offices and dignities to the highest bidders; and this extraordinary multiplication of lucrative posts, was one of the principal causes that drew the nobles, who had hitherto resided in their castles to the capitals and to the courts of the princes, and thus the splendour of the latter was considerably augmented.

Before this period the usual diversions of the court were of such a nature that females could never, or at least very seldom, take part in them. They consisted either in exercises of chivalry, for the purpose of instructing the pages and esquires, or of improving the knights, who were already instructed; in long and fatiguing hunting excursions, and especially in the rude pleasures of the table, which were heightened by obscene stories, narratives of adventures, songs, and whimsical tricks of the company and minstrels, and almost invariably terminated in a general battle, in which the conquerors were distinguished

* See *Meiner's Vergleichung des Mittelalters* I. p. 440, 455; *and Mezeray Histoire de la Mere et du Fils* I. p. 300.

from the conquered, only in being a few degrees less senseless and intoxicated. All those writers who have described a life at court during the fifteenth and at the commencement of the sixteenth century, mention it as one of the most intolerable of hardships; that the courts of kings and princes reverberated day and night with the wild uproar of intoxicated or dissolute men, which rendered it almost impossible to find any tranquil moments for the indulgence of silent reflection, or the enjoyment of undisturbed leisure. The first laws for the purpose of checking intoxication were enacted in the first quarter of the sixteenth century. These laws were long evaded, and for that reason they were frequently repeated; but, nevertheless, general intoxication was common at the tables of many of the German princes till the commencement of the eighteenth century.*

After what has already been said, it is scarcely necessary to observe, that the mode of life of the more ancient princes, and the ordinary diversions of their courts, must of course have prevented females

* See *Mémoires du Baron de Pöllnitz.*

from being either spectators or partakers of them. The European princes and nobles of the middle ages did not, it is true, shut up their wives and daughters in harems; but ladies of distinction, were, in the ordinary course of things, as totally excluded from court as though they had been locked up and strictly guarded after the manner of the Greek and Oriental females. The habitations and the mode of life of princesses were so very different from those of their husbands, that in the household regulations of St. Louis and Philip the Fair, the queen is mentioned only once, and that in the place which treats of the *maitre de l'ostel.* Were it not for this passage, it might be supposed from both these ordinances, that their royal authors had neither wives nor daughters. Princesses and other ladies of distinction never appeared in public, except on extraordinary festivals, or other brilliant and solemn occasions of a similar nature. At other times they were engaged in their solitary habitations and apartments, in the superintendence of the domestic concerns, in the education of their daughters and in female employments, especially embroidery. In these works

they were assisted by their maids of honour, or ladies of the bed-chamber, whose number was very small; or the latter at least bore them company.* When the kings lived apart from their consorts, they had in their palaces no persons of the female sex, except a few of those menials, whose services are indispensibly necessary in every family, such as washer-women, needle-women, &c. and even these were removed by Philip the Fair from his court.† In like manner, the palaces and apartments of the queens or princesses were inaccessible to all persons of the other sex, except the *maitre de l'hotel*, and the knights or esquires, who mounted guard before the doors and chambers of the princesses. At table, in rising and going to bed, in undressing and dressing, queens and princesses were attended only by their women and maids; and this ancient practice was retained by the queens

* Such was the mode of life and occupation of the wife of the celebrated Duc de Sully. See his *Mémoires* III. p. 218.

† "Item, toutes les femmes qui demourent en l'ostel le Roy à Paris soient ostées, c'est assavoir, la contre-pointiere, ou celle qui en son leu, la consturiere, la femme baudran, et toutes les autres qui sont en certain office." *Ordonnance* in *Du Cange*, p. 115.

of France so late as the sixteenth century. This system admitted of no deviations, except in cases of sickness, injournies, or imminent perils. When St. Louis was dangerously ill at Paris, he was attended by several of the ladies of honour belonging to the queen-mother.* His consort, on the other hand, previous to her delivery, which took place three days after she had received intelligence of the captivity of her husband in Egypt, had a knight eighty years of age for her attendant. The hoary warrior took the queen by the hand and comforted her, whenever she started up in her sleep, and exclaimed with terror that her chamber was full of Saracens.† The same knight promised the queen that he would take her life before she should fall into the hands of the infidels. When the kings and princes had mothers, these were, as it would appear, the natural and sometimes very severe lady-stewardesses of their daughters-in-law. Queen Blanche, the mother of St. Louis, would not suffer even her son to visit his wife at any other time than at night, when he went to bed with

* *Joinville*, p. 24.

† *Ibid.* p. 84.

her.* The king, however, sometimes repaired privily to the apartment of his consort, and if, while he was there, the queen-mother chanced to approach, the yeomen of the guard, according to a preconcerted signal, made a noise with their staves to give the king timely notice to withdraw. Blanche once found her son by the bed of the queen, whose life was in danger, in consequence of a miscarriage. Even on this occasion she would not suffer him to remain, but conducted him to the door, saying: "Begone from this place, where you have nothing to do." The queen seeing this, exclaimed: "Alas! you will not suffer me to see my lord either in life or death!"—and immediately swooned, so that she was supposed to be actually dead. The king returned, and with great difficulty brought his wife again to herself.

It is necessary to make a careful distinction between the domestic life of the princesses of the middle ages, and their public life on grand court-days, and other festive occasions. Even the sovereigns of the Carlovingian race, were accustomed to hold annually two grand court-days,

* *Joinville*, p. 126, 127.

generally at Easter and Christmas, on which they appeared in the royal insignia, with the crown upon their heads, distributed rich clothes and costly presents among the grandees of their court and empire, and threw money among the common people.* The monarchs of the house of Capet continued these brilliant galas, and after the example of the French kings, William the Conqueror introduced them in England, with this difference, that while the former confined them to Easter and All-Saints, they were held by the Norman at least thrice a year, that is to say, at the three great festivals, and each time all the vassals of the crown were invited by a circular letter from the king. Some writers termed these periodical assemblages crowned court-days, because the monarch appeared with the crown upon his head: but they were more commonly denominated either *Cours plénieres, solennelles, publiques, generalés,* or *ouvertes.* This practice of holding grand court-days, on which the kings or princes summoned their powerful vassals around them, gradually declined, because abundance of

* See the fifth Dissertation of *Du Cange, des cours et festes solennelles des Rois de France,* p. 157.

extraordinary occasions for solemn or public courts presented themselves to kings and princes. These occasions either arose out of the necessity of consulting with their faithful subjects on some apprehended or intended war or crusade; the coronations of kings; the solemn reception of royal brides or newly married queens, or ambassadors, or other distinguished persons, to whom it was designed to do honour; the birth or nuptials of any of the children of the sovereigns; the foundation and anniversaries of orders of knighthood; or, finally, the mere desire to display their magnificence in brilliant festivities, or their strength and expertness in arms at public tournaments, in hopes of gaining the affections of some admired object. In all the cases enumerated above, the principal nobility of the realm were commanded by proclamation or summons to repair at a specified time to the courts of the kings or princes: and this summons, those who held places under the crown, and particularly hereditary offices, durst by no means disobey. To these summonses, to the vassals themselves, was in general added a command or request from the kings and princes, or the

queens and princesses, to bring their wives and daughters along with them to court.* Splendid tournaments were announced by heralds, not only in the dominions of the kings or princes by whom they were to be held, but likewise in all the adjacent countries. The festivities of the grand court-days consisted principally of solemn processions, tournaments, and magnificent entertainments, followed by brilliant balls. In all these amusements the ladies took a share. The manner in which they participated in them is well worthy of notice, because it shews how the boasted courtesy of the ancient knights was expressed; in what cases it proved victorious over the rigid etiquette of the court, which however was not strictly enforced; and on what occasions the respect due to

* Thus, for instance, the young king Edward had more than 500 knights at his court on the grand court-day, which he held in 1327, in honour of John, Count of Hainault and his knights; "et Madame la Royne," says Froissart, "tint sa cour, et sa feste au dortouer, et eut bien à sa table seans, soixante demoiselles, qu'elle avoit prinses, pour festoyer ledit Messire Jehan de Haynaut et ses autres seigneurs." Vol. I. p. 16. On the institution of the Order of the Garter, "Le Roy assembla de tous sons pays comtes, barons, et chevaliers; et devoit etre accompaignée la Royne d'Angleterre de trois cens dames et Damoiselles, toutes nobles, et gentils-dames, et parées richement de paremens semblables." *Ibid.* I. *ch.* 102, *p.* 116.

the beauty and virtues of the other sex was obliged to give way to the reverence demanded by birth and rank.

In the solemn processions of more ancient times, much depended on this point, whether they were instituted in honour of females, as on occasion of the entry of royal or princely brides, or newly married queens and princesses into their future residences; or whether they were held by females of high rank in honour of distinguished persons of the other sex.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth century, the brides of kings and princes, or newly married queens, made their solemn entry, either in magnificent, covered carriages,* in litters equally splendid, either covered or open, and drawn likewise by horses,†

* For example, Isabel of Bavaria, on her first entry into Paris, *Froissart*, II. ch. 164. p. 288, 89. In the 16th century, the state carriages were so eonstrueted that the ladies were seated before the doors which were open, in order that the people might not only see their persons, but likewise their dress. In this manner appeared the Duchess Dowager of Lorrain, at the coronation of Charles IX. at Rheims. "She was seated," says Brantome, "in a splendid carriage which was drawn by four white Turkish horses, all harnessed abreast, in the manner of a triumphal ear. She was at the door highly dressed, &e." *Dames Gal.* II. p. 107.

† As Isabel of Bavaria, in one of her subsequent entries into Paris, *Froissart*, IV. p. 2, 3. On this oecasion, other ladies were in covered litters, or in covered

but in general on horseback.‡ Ladies of distinction, whether they rode in coaches or on horseback, or were carried in chairs, on these occasions, were almost always attended by men whose rank was not more than one or two degrees below that of the ladies to whom the honour was intended to be paid. Hence it was an extraordinary courtesy, that the King of the Romans elect, who was afterwards emperor, by the title of Frederic III. rode beside the litter of the duchess of Burgundy. † It was customary for kings to meet their brides or their wives, or princes of inferior consequence to themselves, at the staircase, or at the door of the palace, where the ladies fell upon their knees, and were raised and embraced; which last honour

carriages, or on horseback. Travelling in litters was common in France till the end of the seventeenth century. Madame de Sèvigné, makes frequent mention of this mode of travelling in her Letters.

‡ For instance, Philippa of Lancaster, the bride of the King of Portugal, *Froissart*, III. p. 172. In the year 1514, the English Princess Mary, the second wife of Louis XII. made her entry on a *hacquenée*, while her attendants rode in carriages. *Mémoires de Fleuranges*, p. 185. On the first entry of Louis XI. into Paris, Philip Duke of Burgundy, had the Duchess of Orléans behind him on his charger, and before him the beautiful infant daughter of a citizen of Paris. *Observ. sur les Mémoires de du Clercq*. p. 529,

† *Olivier de la Marche*, I. p. 59.

kings and princes paid also to the ladies of their retinue.* The practice of kissing ladies on their first presentation to distinguished persons of the other sex,† was as common as the kneeling of ladies on the same occasion, or when they were petitioning or returning thanks for any favour. In 1323, Isabel, Queen of England, not only implored the assistance of her brother Charles, King of France, on her knees,‡ but would also have knelt in token of her gratitude to John Count of Hainault, who promised her his aid, and engaged that, in case he kept his word, she and her son should be his vassals for ever.§ In 1353, the two queen-dowagers Joanna

* See the reception of Philippa of Lancaster, in *Froissart*, III. p 172, 173, 175.

† Even popes kissed ladies who attended them, on the mouth, at least if they were akin to them. *Froissart*, III. p. 362.

‡ "Adoncques la dame s'agenouilla, voulut le Roi ou non, tout bas à terre" &c. *Froissart* I. p. 5.

§ "Adoncques la Reine (qui se scoit et Messire Jehan devant elle) se dreça en estant, et se voulut agenouiller, de la grande joye qu'elle avoit; mais le gentil Messire Jehan se leva appertement, et prit la Dame entre ses bras, et lui dit: ne plaise à dieu que la Royne d'Angleterre face ce: mais, Dame, reconfortez vous, si vous me voulez faire ce que vous me promettez par courtoisie, je deviendray votre serf, et mon fils votre serf a tousjours: et mettrons toute le Royaume d'Angleterre en votre abandon, et à bon droit." *Froissart*, I. p. 17.

and Blanche, as also Charles the Cruel, King of Navarre, returned thanks on their knees to the King of France for pardoning the latter the murder of the constable de Clisson, and restoring him again to favour.* After the example of queens and princesses, other females of rank and quality fell on their knees before their benefactors ;† and it was esteemed a great courtesy when the knights prevented this obeisance, or quickly raised the kneeling ladies, and embraced them, or kissed their hands according to the Italian custom.‡ Reigning queens addressed their husbands no otherwise than, *Mon Seigneur*, my lord; and kings called their consorts not *Madame*, but merely *Dame* ;§ and this term was used even by counts and lords, in

* *Froissart*, I. p. 177.

† As did the mother and her two daughters, whom the Chevalier Bayard rescued from death and violation at the taking of Brescia. *Vie de Bayard* c. 51 p. 289.---and the wife of a counsellor of the parliament at Bourdeaux, before M. de Vielleville, *Mém. du March. de Vielleville*, II. p. 4.

‡ *Vie de Bayard*, as above. At least such I take to be the signification of the following words : " Si leur toucha à toutes en la main."

§ The dying queen Philippa of England intreated her husband, with whom she had lived very happily during the period of their union to grant her three things. " Le Roy tout en plorant et en larmoyant respondit et dit : Dame, demandez." And the queen said : " Monseigneur, je vous prie" &c. *Froissart*, I. p. 377

speaking to queens, if they were not the vassals of the latter.* In the fifteenth and sixteenth century, *Madame* was a title of honour that was given only to the wives of actual knights.† Other ladies whose husbands had not acquired that distinction were called *Damoiselles, Demoiselles, Mademoiselles.*‡ After the honour of knighthood was done away, or at least greatly diminished, by being so frequently conferred on the unworthy, and even the wives of doctors began to assume the title of Madame, many ladies of distinction were

* Thus, John count of Hainault, says to the queen of England, who came to implore his assistance: "Certes Dame, veezcy votre Chevalier." The queen addressed him with *Sire. Froissart*, I. p. 7.

† "People piqued themselves not a little on having been in a battle, and hastened to the field as they would to a jubilee, one to secure the salvation of his soul, another to gain the honour of knighthood, and the appellation of *Madame* for his wife." *Brantome Vies des Hommes illustres*, III. p. 178. "Now it is a custom in France, which has been observed for ages, that damoyselles receive the title of Madame, when their husbands are honoured with the rank of knighthood; and so tenacious are they of this honour, that they will not lose this quality, nor fail to take precedence of another, be she ever so rich, whose husband is not a knight." *Carloix Mémoires du Marechal de Vieilleville*, II. p. 104.

‡ This custom continued till the conclusion of the sixteenth century, as may be seen by many passages in *Etoile Journal de Henri* III. *et Henri* IV. Even in the next century the celebrated Maintenon, was called *Mademoiselle*, after the death of her husband; the poet Scarron. *Histoire amoureuse des Gaules*, IV. p. 85.

either so modest, or so proud, that they would not take it till their husbands had been invested with some celebrated, royal, or princely order.*

It was not till the latter half of the seventeenth century, that the significations of the words *Madame* and *Mademoiselle* were changed to their present acceptation. It was customary in France, and at the court of Burgundy, till toward the end of the fifteenth century, for the kings and princes to give their relatives the complimentary epithet of *beaux* and *belles*.†

* "But Mademoiselle Espinay was so modest and discreet, that she would never be called *Madame*, and what is still more, she protested she never would receive that title till her husband became a knight of some order: despising the other kind of knighthood as too common, and being indiscriminately conferred by the kings, on all persons in an army, without choice, or respect of extraction or merit; saying she should have too many companions, among others, the wives of lawyers; for she knew at least a dozen presidents and counsellors, who were not a little vain of that quality, which they declared they had deserved by going through their entire course of law, on account of which they had been admitted to the degree of doctors." *Carloix Mem. de Vielleville*, as above.

† "Est aussi a sçavoir que quand les Roys, Roynes, Ducqs, Duchesses, Princesses, ont des parents, niepces, cousins-germains et autres de grand linage, puisqu'ils sont de sang royal, les doibvent appeller beaux-nepueux, belles-niepces, beaux-cousins, belles-tantes et belles-cousines" &c. *Les honneurs de la Cour*, p. 262. The nobles and gentry were not permitted to use the same appellations. p. 263.

As princes and knights were frequently absent from their residences, it was not rarely the case that females had to do the honours of the house, and to receive distinguished guests with all the ceremony due to their dignity. On these occasions, it was necessary to consider, not only the rank of the guests, but whether the lady who was to receive them, lay under any obligations to them or not. If the guests were of much higher rank than the hostess, or she was under particular obligations to them, she walked or rode a considerable distance to meet the strangers. Thus the beautiful Countess of Salisbury descended from her castle, when King Edward was coming to pay her a visit, directed all the gates to be thrown wide open, went out beyond them to meet her august guest, knelt before him, conducted him first into the hall of the knights, and afterwards into his bed-chamber. She then withdrew for a short time, in order to pay due honour to the retinue of the monarch, but soon returned to amuse the king till dinner time, on which she accompanied him to table.* Soon after-

* *Froissart*, I. ch. 78. p. 93, 94.

wards, the Countess of Blois, in Bretagne, went out from her castle to meet Sir Walter Mauny, and other English knights who had rescued her from her enemies, and repeatedly kissed her deliverers, and their attendants.* When the Dauphin, afterwards Louis XI. sought protection of Philip, Duke of Burgundy, from the persecution of his father, the wives of the duke and his son, together with a princess of Cleves went, on his arrival, to the outermost gate of the palace; and as he alighted from his horse, threw themselves upon their knees before him.† The heir to the French crown would have given the precedence to the duchess, and offered her his arm to conduct her back to the palace; but the Princess of Burgundy declined the intended honour saying, that it did not belong to her. On this point a dispute then took place, and lasted more than a quarter of an hour. At length the Dauphin was obliged to take the place of honour, and to suffer the duchess to con-

* *Froissart*, I. ch. 82. p. 99. "Lors descendit la Comtesse du Chastel, la joyeuse chere: et vint baiser Messire Gautier de Mauny, et ses compaignons, les uns apres les autres, deux fois ou trois, comme vaillante dame."

† *Les honneurs de la Cour*, p. 209, and following pages.

duct him to his apartment, where she took leave of him, with a low curtesy. On going out to meet him, the train of the duchess was borne by one of her ladies of honour, and that of her daughter-in-law, the Countess de Charolois, by a gentleman belonging to the court. As soon as the princesses perceived the Dauphin, the train-bearers withdrew. From that moment, the countess de Charolois supported her train herself; a gentleman, indeed, assisted the dutchess to bear her's, but she had herself one hand continually engaged with it. The duchess never suffered any of her dishes to be brought to table covered, and either these or her wines to be previously tasted in the presence of the Dauphin, though both were customary with persons of her rank. On the contrary, she herself tasted and brought the pastry and confectionary, after dinner, to the Dauphin, and the Princess of Cleves poured out his wine.

When Charles VIII. of France, on his march to Naples, approached the city of Turin, the duchess-dowager Blanche, of the house of Montferrat, rode out to meet him, in the most splendid attire, with a great retinue of ladies and of knights; conducted her royal guest into the capital,

presented her young son to him at the gate of the palace, and offered him whatever herself, or her country, had to give. This was by no means an empty compliment. She pawned her own valuable jewels, and those belonging to her family, and thus raised a considerable sum for the use of the needy monarch.*

As men of high distinction honoured ladies of inferior rank with a kiss, so ladies of high rank, even in the sixteenth century, conferred the same salute on men of lower condition.† When the emperor Ferdinand I. during the audience in which the Marshal de Vielleville had first proposed the match between the princess Elizabeth and the young king Charles IX. of France, presented his niece to the French ambassador, the princess would have given him a kiss. M. de Vielleville, at first declined with a low bow, the too great honour that was intended him.‡ As the princess, however, insisted on paying him this compliment, the marshal ac-

* *Brantome Femmes Gal.* II. p. 110, 111.

† Queen Blanche, mother of St. Louis, kissed a young German prince on the forehead, from a motive of piety, because she heard that his mother, St. Elizabeth of Thuringia, had been accustomed to do the same. *Joinville*, p. 22.

‡ *Carloix Mém. de Vielleville*, IV. p. 309.

quiesced, and declared that he regarded the salute as the greatest honour he had ever experienced during his whole life; adding, that the princess must permit him to kiss her hand, in token of his continual obedience, and everlasting devotion, to a princess who was destined one day to reign over him as a queen. At his audience of leave M. de Vielleville, put a very beautiful diamond ring on the finger of the destined bride of his sovereign. The princess graciously accepted the present, and honoured the marshal with a third kiss.* To many of my readers, it will perhaps appear less extraordinary that an illustrious and virtuous princess should kiss the ambassador of a great monarch, than that the beautiful and favourite mistresses of kings should be suffered to confer the same kind of salute on any other persons than their royal lovers. Henry IV. commanded the fair Gabrielle d'Etrées, to take off the mask, which it was then usual to wear, and to kiss his friend d'Aubigné.† On another occasion, when the Marshal de Bassompierre respectfully

* "Et lui mectant cette belle et riche bague au doit, elle l'honora du troisiesme baiser." *Mém de Vielleville*, IV. p. 323.

† *Mémoires de la Vie de T. A. d'Aubigné.* p. 135.

kissed the same lady's robe, Henry purposely withdrew to give his mistress an opportunity of kissing the marshal on the mouth.* As ladies of distinction were accustomed to give those knights, to whom they intended to do honour, or to express their gratitude, one or more kisses on the mouth, and the knights kissed the hands of the ladies in token of devotion, *hand and mouth* became the watchword of innocent and respectful love; and even those who had already obtained, or had hopes of obtaining the last favours, never requested of their fair ones any thing else than hand and mouth.†

The preceding facts are not calculated to inspire any high opinion of the respect paid by the ancient knights to the fair sex. That respect was universally superseded by deference to rank and birth. If ladies happened to be one, or a few degrees inferior in rank to the knights to whom they wished to do honour, or by

* *Mémoires de Bassomp.* I. p. 48.

† The Chevalier Bayard, however, was perfectly serious, when he requested only mouth and hand of Madame de Fluras." "Je suis assuré," said he, "que je n'en auray jamais que la bouche et les mains; car de vous requérir d'autre chose je perdrois ma peine; aussi sur mon ame j'aymerois mieux mourir, que vous presser de deshonneur." *Hist. du Cheval. Bayard*, p. 64.

whom they were received, they were obliged to kneel before them like slaves, and to wait upon them like menial servants.

Very different was the relative situation of knights and ladies at tournaments, which may justly be called the most splendid of all the festivities and the most interesting of all the diversions of the middle ages. The same etiquette, which, under the circumstances already mentioned, degraded female virtue and beauty very far below the adventitious superiority in point of birth and rank possessed by the other sex, and reduced even princesses to be the maid-servants, as it were, of princes still more illustrious; that same etiquette, in contradiction with itself, exalted at tournaments female beauty and virtue, and in general the former alone, very far above, not only all the advantages of rank and condition, but also the most transcendent excellence in men, and constituted them umpires, who could decide on the merits of the most illustrious and the most noble, and dispense fame, rewards, and punishments with almost arbitrary power. I must here briefly recal to the memory of the reader, what has been treated more

circumstantially in the former volume of this work.

One of the most important requisitions preparatory to solemn tournaments was, that the helmets, and coat of arms of the kings, princes, and knights, who intended to display proofs of their strength and valour, should be publicly exhibited. This was done with a view that the ladies might mark the helmet of every knight who had injured their honour either in word or deed, and thereby exclude him from the approaching tournament. If the excluded knights were found guilty, they were beaten most severely, till they begged pardon of the ladies whom they had offended, and obtained their forgiveness. With this right of punishment enjoyed by the ladies, was united a still more extensive privilege of shewing favour. Previous to the opening of the tournament, they chose a knight, called the *Chevalier des Dames*, and distinguished him by a veil affixed to a lance, for the purpose of taking under his protection, in the name of the ladies, and skreening from merited punishment, any knight, who in the tumult of the contest might happen to transgress the laws by which it was governed. Previous

to the opening of every tournament, all the princes, lords, and knights who entered the lists, paid their homage to the ladies, assembled on lofty scaffolds superbly decorated, called themselves the servants of love, and as such wore the colours or the livery of the fair-ones to whom they had dedicated their services: nay, they even demanded of their ladies, not only some pledge of love, such as a protecting amulet, but also the watch-word by which they were to animate their courage, and to make themselves known amid the dangers of the conflict. When the grand combat was over, they broke another lance in honour of the ladies, and then in anxious expectation, awaited from the decision of those females who were either the sole, or at least joint arbitresses, the thanks or praises of superior valour, which were given to the conquerors by the noblest, the most virtuous, and the most beautiful of their number. Many knights carried their zeal in the service of the fair to such a height, as to impose on themselves painful privations, and voluntary penances, till they should have performed extraordinary achievements of valour, in honour of their ladies.* Others vowed

* Among the young English warriors, who in 1336,

not to cover some particular part of the body for a certain period, even in battle, as though they were more effectually secured by the protection of their goddesses, than by the strongest armor.† Others made vows to travel for a time through all the regions of Christendom, and compel every knight they met to acknowledge their ladies to be the fairest; or to continue their peregrinations till they had vanquished a certain number of knights, and obliged them to present themselves to the ladies of the conquerors as their slaves.*†

All these asseverations of entire devotion, all these vows, apparently so pas-

repaired to Valenciennes to make war upon the King of France, were several who had one of their eyes bound up. "And there were among them," says Froissart, "several young gentlemen who had each one eye covered with cloth: and it was reported, that they had vowed to ladies of their country, to see only with one eye till they should have performed some feats of valour in the kingdom of France." *Froissart*, I. p. 37.

* This is the subject of the ancient romance, *des trois Chevaliers et del Chanise*, in *St. Palaye*, III. p. 138.—Three knights courted at the same time the favour of a lady. The lady gave one of her servants a shirt to take to the three lovers with this message; that she would bestow her hand and heart on him who should have courage, and love sufficient to put on the shirt instead of a cuirass, and thus equipped, to sustain a serious conflict.

† Such a vow was made by Galeazzo of Milan, in honour of Joanna, Queen of Naples. *Brantome Dames Illustres*, p. 376, 378.

sionate, and all these sacrifices were nothing but vain ostentation, nothing but the affectation of ardent love and refined feelings, of which, during the whole age of chivalry, very few were susceptible, and indeed none but those who had become heroes of virtue and pure attachment, without the gaudy tinsel of knight-errantry. Because the idolatrous homage paid to the ladies was mere hypocrisy, for this very reason it was carried beyond the limits of truth and nature, and at the same time, contradicted by the lives, or the general conduct of the knights. Never, during the whole of the middle ages, were more females of quality, married and unmarried, seduced, carried off, and violated, than in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which may be styled the very flower of the age of chivalry.* In the last-mentioned period, when the licentious warriors had taken besieged towns, or scaled strong castles, it was the common right of war to ravish all the females, and even afterwards to put them to a cruel death.†

* See *Histoire de Messire Jean de Boucicaut*, 4to. p. 143.

† "Nul des Seigneurs n'y estoit (au chasteau de Poys): fors deux belles Damoiselles, filles au seigneur de Poys; qui tost eussent esté violées, si n'eussent esté deux Chevaliers d'Angleterre: Messire Jehan Chandos, et le Sire

The same knights who violated the wives and daughters of their enemies, made no scruple to debauch the wives and children of their friends and vassals, and gave themselves no kind of concern if the right of retaliation was exercised upon their own.

If, notwithstanding these facts, farther proof were still required, that the homage paid to the fair, of which the knights of former times made such a parade, especially at tournaments, was not the result of pure and genuine respect; this might easily be found in the ludicrous exaggerations of their idolatry. The very festivals of fools in the middle ages, were not more absurd than the Courts of Love, and the Orders of Love; the latter of which, indeed, numbered many martyrs of their unexampled folly, but not of genuine affection. The proofs of gallantry exhibited by various knights at the Burgundian Court, in the fifteenth century, were perfectly consonant with the spirit of the more ancient courts and orders of love.

Basset." *Froissart*, I. p. 147. The few exceptions to the general usage of war were owing to such men as Boucicaut, du Guesclin, Saintré, Chandos, Bayard, &c. The ancient right of war was practised during the greatest part of the sixteenth century.

In the year 1468, at the magnificent tournament held by the Bastard of Burgundy, in honour of the Princess Margaret of England, the second wife of Charles the Bold; a Burgundian knight, Jehan de Chassa, applied by the following letter, addressed to the ladies assembled on that occasion, for permission to be present at the exercises of chivalry:

"High and mighty prince and lady, and you, my other gracious princesses and ladies, permit a knight-slave, born in the kingdom of servitude,* to announce to you his arrival in this noble city, and that in the company of a lady-errant to whose guidance he has been committed by his fair mistress. The knight-slave can with truth assert, that he has during his whole life, been held in servitude by a lady, and that, though she gave encouragement to his hopes, yet she never could resolve to accept him for her servant. As his love-sickness increased to such a degree that he was no longer able to endure its torments, he ventured, in a state of despairing hope, to implore mercy, favour, and an alleviation of his pain, of which

* ---- "un chevalier esclave, né du Royaume d'Esclavonie." *Olivier de la Marche*, II. 170.

he knew himself to be unworthy, but which he conceived he had deserved by his true and constant devotion.* Notwithstanding this humble request, the said lady still continued in her haughty indifference, her disobedience to love, and her neglect of that female virtue, compassion, and deprived him of all hope of ever enjoying happiness in this world; so that he retired, full of indignation and anguish, to a solitary habitation among rocks, mountains, and trackless forests, and there lived nine months on nothing but sorrow, sighs, and tears. Had this state lasted a little longer, the afflicted knight would soon have closed his earthly career. But when the lady received intelligence of his condition, she was touched with remorse for her culpable ingratitude, and sent the said lady-errant to represent to him, that the raptures of love must be purchased by patience, long-suffering, and

* These antitheses and contradictions appear still more striking in the original. "Toutefois ledit Chevalier, par maladie d'amour aggravée, longuement nourrie en son cœur, a souffert l'angoiseuse, et travaillable peine, qu'il n'estoit plus puissant de porter, ne justrir, et par une espérance désespérée, s'est enhardie ledict Chevalier de requérir misericorde, grace et guerdon d'amours, soy tenant indigne de l'avoir, mais toutesfoyes l'avoir loyaument merité et desservy." *Olivier de la Marche*, II. p. 171.

manifold tribulations; that the higher is the price paid for its pleasures, so much the more exquisite is the enjoyment; and that in love there is no greater crime than despair. The lady therefore exhorted the knight-slave to indulge hope instead of despair, and to take courage instead of yielding to pusillanimity. The lady-errant likewise persuaded him to undertake a journey, in order to dissipate his grief; the fair one promising to accompany him for a whole year, for the purpose of consoling him in his affliction, and giving his mistress an account of his adventures. The knight followed this counsel, though he is from Sclavonia, and has no acquaintance in these regions. But as the said knight recollected that even divers infidels, especially the valiant Saladin, had come to France to acquire glory, and that they had experienced the most honourable reception in this noble kingdom; but, induced more particularly by the fame and the sublime virtues of the exalted house of Burgundy, and the report that foreigners were no where better received, and that the exercises and feats of chivalry were no where more studiously cultivated than by

that noble house, he repaired hither in company with the lady-errant, and met with his first fortunate adventure in the noble enterprize of the knight of the golden tree, and the commencement of this brilliant tournament. He therefore intreats the sublime princess and lady, the Duchess of Burgundy, and the other princesses and ladies, to use their interest with the high and mighty Lord and Duke of Burgundy, to procure permission for him to take part in this famous tournament," &c.

To this same tournament came a dwarf, riding upon a little white poney, having a petition in his left hand, and suspended from his right arm a key to a mysterious castle, which slowly advanced behind him. When the dwarf, and the castle which contained a Count de Roussy on horseback, and in complete armour, arrived in front of the ladies' scaffold, he handed to them a petition, to the following effect:

"Sublime, illustrious, and noble princesses and ladies! The knight who is held a prisoner by his lady, most respectfully salutes you. His situation is briefly this. Danger possesses the key of this prison, and has placed it in the hands of

Little Hope.* The knight will never be able to procure his release from this dungeon, unless through your favour and compassion. The captive knight therefore implores you, serene princesses, and noble ladies, that you would assemble your virtuous council, (for among many, there might be one, to whom Danger would not refuse the deliverance of the knight) to the end that Little Hope, who conducts him, may be commanded to release the prisoner from his irksome confinement, for otherwise he cannot take part in the present tournament, and assist in finishing the adventure of the golden tree, which he desires no less ardently than the honour to remain the faithful servant of the illustrious princesses, and all the other noble ladies."

The petition of the knight was taken into consideration, and the ladies soon directed that he should be released. The dwarf opened the door, and out sprung the Count de Roussy, on a horse beautifully caparisoned and clad in complete armour.

A third knight was conducted into the

* Son cas est tel, que danger tient la clef de ceste prison et l'a mis és mains de petit espoir. *Oliv. de la Marche,* II. p. 182.

lists by a beautiful young lady, who bore the appellation of the *Dame Blanche*. She was dressed in white satin, was seated on a white horse, and delivered to the ladies a poetic petition, in which she informed them that the knight whom she conducted, was her servant, and that she therefore requested permission for him to shew his prowess at the tournament of the knight of the golden tree, in order that he might thereby render himself more worthy of her love.* If the gallantry of the ancient knights was not ludicrous idolatry, it must however be admitted to have been childish play.

Tournaments were always concluded with a splendid dinner or supper, according to the time of day at which they were held. At these entertainments the ladies were also present, but they figured at them in a very different manner than is commonly imagined.

At court entertainments two points demanded particular attention; that is to say, whether they were given on grand court-days or not; and whether the consorts of the kings and princes, who provided the banquet, belonged to those who designed

* *Oliv. de la Marche*, II. 175, 176.

to do honour to others, or to maintain the dignity of the crown and house, or rather to the number of such as were themselves intended to be honoured. In each of these cases a different order or etiquette was observed; but all of them were governed by this rule, that the ladies and gentlemen, who were not of the first rank, should never be seated promiscuously at the same table, but that the ladies should always be placed by themselves at one, and the gentlemen at another.

When kings and princes intended to do honour to their brides, or newly married consorts, these, together with the princesses of the house, or the principal ladies who had accompanied them, were seated at the table of the sovereign; but all the other ladies were assembled at one or more tables. Thus, at the first grand entertainment given by Charles VI. in honour of his consort, Isabel of Bavaria, after her solemn entry into Paris, besides some bishops, the young queen, and a King of Armenia, none but princesses belonging to the royal family were seated at the table of the king.* At two other tables, that went all round the palace, more than

* *Froissart*, IV. p. 5.

five hundred other ladies were entertained.* At the banquet given by Charles the Bold, the day after his nuptials with the English princess Margaret, only the mother of the princess, and the Duchess of Norfolk were seated at the table of the duke, because his mother and his bride ate in their own apartments. The other English ladies were entertained at a second, and the gentlemen at a third table.† According to the same rules, Count Gaston de Foix placed his illustrious and noble guests of both sexes, at the splendid dinner to which he invited the whole court of France.

When kings or princes and their consorts, or mothers, designed on grand court-days, jointly to maintain the honour of the crown or family, and to honour the assembled princes and gentlemen, together with their wives and daughters, the rules observed were widely different. The kings and princes then ate at one, and their consorts or mothers at another table. At the table of the kings, were seated the

* A deux autres tables tout environ le palais seoyent plus de cinq cens demoiselles.

† Aux autres deux tables furent en l'une toutes les Dames, et en l'autre tous les cavaliers et seigneurs Anglois. *Oliv. de la Marche*, II. p. 168.

principal nobles and gentlemen, and at that of the queens, the princesses and ladies of the highest distinction. For the other knights, as well as for the ladies of inferior rank, who had assembled at the court of the queen, there were separate tables. Thus St. Louis, at the grand court-day, which he held at Saumur, dined with his princes and lords in one hall, and Queen Blanche, with her ladies in another; and both were served on the occasion by the chief vassals of the crown.* Agreeably to the same etiquette, the young king Edward of England, in 1327, entertained his princes and lords in one apartment, and the queen-mother feasted her ladies in another.† At the nuptials of Charles VII. in 1413, the princes and gentlemen ate at two tables in the king's dining room, and the princesses and ladies at the same number in that of the queen; and at the latter, not a single guest of the other sex was present.‡

When kings or great princes and their consorts did not hold a regular court,

* *Joinville*, p. 21, 22.

† *Froissart*, I. p. 14.

‡ "Et disnoient le jour de nopces toutes les Dames en la salle ou la Royne disnoit, et nul homme n'y estoit assis." *Les Honneurs de la Cour*, p. 195.

they frequently ate together, and invited to their tables gentlemen and ladies, who could not have expected such an honour on grand court-days. In 1454, the consort of Philip the Good, of Burgundy, gave a splendid dinner, eight days after the nuptials of her son the Count of Charolois, and invited to it all the ladies of Lisle. These ladies dined, without exception, at the tables of the two princesses, because the latter were prevented by the absence of the reigning duke from holding any regular court-day.* In 1387, several French knights repaired to the court of the Duke of Lancaster, to challenge the English knights to honourable combat. After it had ended without accident, the duke invited the French knights to his table, and placed the most illustrious of these strangers by the side of his wife. After the repast, the duchess took Messire Regnaud le Roye by the hand, and conducted him into the audience cham-

* " Huit jours apres les nopces, Madame Isabeau, la Duchesse, fit un beau banquet, où toutes les Dames de Lille furent, mais on s'assit toutes ensemble, comme par coustume l'on fait en banquet, *sans que Mesdames tinssent Etat*, comme à tel cas appertenoit." *Les Honneurs de la Cour*, p. 187.

ber, where she conversed with him, till the wine and confectionary were brought.*

As the ladies were thus invariably separated from the cavaliers at these court banquets, the latter had, on such occasions, no other opportunity of exercising courtesy toward the female part of the company, than when the kings and princes, with the lords and knights whom they had entertained, proceeded after the repast, to the dining-rooms of their consorts and their ladies, or joined them after they had risen from table in the audience-chamber, or great saloon for the reception of company.† The escorting of ladies to and from tournaments, banquets, and balls, likewise afforded another opportunity for shewing courtesy, but very little for conversation, because the ladies went and returned, either on horseback, or in litters and coaches.‡

The society and conversation were much more free and unreserved at the entertainments, which followed the tournaments held without great ceremony in the latter part of the age of chivalry, by celebrated knights and their friends and ac-

* *Froissart*, III. ch. 59. p. 183.
† *Froissart*, IV. p. 8.
‡ *Ibid.*

quaintance, at the request of certain individual ladies, or in honour of the ladies of some particular city. To these banquets the young cavaliers conducted the ladies by the arm, and ate in their company at the tables of those knights, who had directed the tournament, or had gained the highest prizes. During this attendance, as well as at the repast, they conversed without restraint on love or other sprightly subjects, which were never introduced at the ceremonious entertainments given by the court.* Knights and esquires, who made a point of observing the rules of ancient courtesy, and duly practising the art of love,† were obliged to praise the beauty and virtue of their ladies beyond all measure; to be so much the more loud and zealous in the commendation of virtue, the oftener it had been sacrificed to them; and finally, to agree in every point with

* "'Vous eussiez veu les jeunes gentilshommes prendre les dames par dessous les bras, et icelles mener parlans d'amours et autres joyeulx devis jusqu'au logis du dict bon chevalier.'" *Vie de Bayard*, ch. x. p. 49. In more ancient times, large companies of knights and ladies were divided into couples, so that a knight and a lady were placed together at a small table, and both ate out of one dish, which was termed, *manger a la même ecuelle*. *Grand d'Aussi*, III. 268. from the *Roman de Perceforest*.

† See the *Instructions d'Amour* from the ancient Provençal poets in *St. Palaye*, II. p. 144, 5 and 6.

the ladies of their hearts, even in contradiction to the manifest truth, and the evidence of their senses. It was impossible that men who served their mistresses as though they had been capricious or evil deities, and flattered them that they might the more readily effect their ruin, could ever feel for them the genuine sentiments of love, regard, or esteem.

If the ceremonious entertainments at courts had not been rendered insipid by the exclusion of the society and conversation of men, still the punctilious or rigid etiquette of the more remote periods, must have made them highly disagreeable. Notwithstanding all the precision of the laws of ancient etiquette, perplexing disputes concerning rank arose at almost every entertainment given by the court, at which several hundreds of ladies were assembled, and the manner of deciding them, always produced dissatisfaction in one of the parties. At the courts of France and Burgundy, it was a general rule that ladies should take the rank of their husbands. According to this principle, at the nuptials of Charles VII. of France, a Countess of Namur was placed at the ladies' table, below all the other countesses, except one. In the middle of the entertainment, the

king entered the queen's dining-room, and conducted the Countess of Namur to the queen's table, that, during the remainder of the repast, she might, in quality of his near relative, enjoy the honour due to her illustrious birth.* The greatness of this honour may be estimated by the following fact: Isabel, Duchess of Burgundy, by birth a princess of Portugal, went in 1445, to Paris, and resided for seven weeks at the court of France. During all this time, she was not once invited either to the king's, or to the queen's table. The Dauphiness, however, paid her frequent visits, and the two princesses were often inseparable companions for two or three successive days.†

The etiquette which elevated kings and princes so much above the rest of mankind, and rendered birth and rank the only standard of human worth, was enforced only on the grand court-days, when the monarch or the prince was surrounded with all the insignia and pomp of his exalted station. Excepting these occasions, sovereigns displayed much greater

* "----- qu'il falloit que le demeurant du disner elle fust assise comme sa cousine germaine, et la fit asseoir à la table de la Royne. *Les Honneurs de la Cour*, p. 195.

† *Ibid.* p. 207.

condescension, and the nobility and citizens, mingled more frequently and familiarly than in later times.

On the death of Charles VII. Philip, Duke of Burgundy, conducted the *ci-devant* Dauphin, who then succeeded to the throne by the the title of Louis XI. to his capital, and resided for some time with his illustrious guest, whom he had entertained for several years with the affection of a brother and the generosity of a prince. During his visit to Paris, he gave frequent and magnificent entertainments and balls in honour of the ladies; and to these festivities, the wives and daughters of the principal citizens of Paris were always invited.* Louis XI. very often dined, not only with the members of the parliament, but also at the houses of other officers of the crown, and inhabitants of the metropolis; and besides princesses and ladies, the wives and daughters of the most respectable citizens of Paris were always present at these entertainments.† Even

* "Le Duc de Bourgogne estoit logé en sa maison d'Artois auquel lieu il fit par plusieurs fois, et comme tous les jours, grande assemblée de Dames, de Damoiselles, et aussi des plus notables Bourgeoises de la ville, et leur donnoit grans soupers et grans banquets" &c. *Olivier de la Marche*, II. p. 62.

† Le Roi avec les seigneurs et aucuns gentilshommes

the consort of Louis XI. did not hesitate to accept an invitation to the house of the first president of the parliament, who not only provided a magnificent repast, but likewise four richly ornamented baths for the accommodation of her majesty. The queen, it is true, was prevented by a slight indisposition from using the latter, but her princesses and attendants were far from despising them, and into one of these baths, a lady of honour to the queen descended, in company with the wife of a citizen of Paris.*

The kings and princes of ancient times

de sa maison soupperent en l'hostel de Maistre Guillaume de Corbie lors Conseiller en sa Cour de Parlement . . . et la y furent plusieurs Damoiselles et honnestes et Bourgeoises dudit lieu de Paris. Et en ce temps le Roy estant au dit lieu de Paris, fist de grandes, honnestes et bonnes cheres en divers lieux et hostels de Paris. *Les Chroniques de Louis XI.* p. 10. See also p. 29, and p. 50.

* La Reyne, accompagnée de madit Dame de Bourbon, et Mademoiselle Bonne de Savoye, sœur de la Reyne, et plusieurs autres Dames de sa compaignie soupperent en l'hostel de Maitre Jean Dauvet premier president en parlement, et elles furent receües et festoyées moult noblement, et a grande largesse, et y eut faits quatre moult beaux bains, et richement ornéz, croyant que la Reyne se y dust baigner, dont elle ne fist rien, pource qu'elle se sentit un peu mal disposée et aussi que le temps estoit dangereux; mais en l'un des dits bains se y baignerent madite Dame de Bourbon, Mademoiselle Bonne de Savoye, et en l'autre bain au joignant se baignerent Madame de Montglat, et Perrette Chalons, Bourgéoise de Paris, et la firent bonne chere. *Les Chroniques de Louis* XI. p. 64, 65.

were nearly in the same situation as the noble families in the small towns and large villages of Germany, at the present day. When they wished, on other occasions besides court-days, to enjoy the pleasures of mixed company, and the amusement of dancing, they were obliged to have recourse to the wives and daughters of the principal inhabitants of their capitals ; because their consorts, and the other princesses had scarcely any ladies about their persons, except their actual attendants, and the number of these was but very small.

Another reason why the wives and daughters of citizens were invited during the latter portion of the middle ages, to the entertainments and balls given by the court, was the increasing power, opulence, and consequence of great cities. In the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, the large cities of our division of the globe contained many thousands of robust and valiant citizens, who were not only trained to the use of arms, but who were neither less expert in all the exercises of chivalry, nor less completely equipped than the most powerful princes and barons. The opulence of the cities,

acquired by commerce and the useful arts; the height and strength of their walls; the size and beauty of their houses: and the profusion and magnificence of their furniture, corresponded with the number and the courage of their warriors. Individual cities were powerful enough to carry on long wars with the greatest princes. In many countries, the cities threatened to destroy the higher and lower orders of the nobility; and where this was not the case, they at least formed the most powerful of the estates. Princes and lords solicited the privileges of citizens, or the honour of serving potent cities for pay. The citizens of many towns obtained all the prerogatives of the nobility, and the nobles frequently sought to obtain, either by their own interest, or by the interposition of emperors, kings, and princes, the hands of the daughters and widows of opulent citizens. The cities, on the other hand, enacted laws against these matches, and purchased or extorted from the sovereigns, charters, by which the latter solemnly renounced the right of forcibly marrying the widows and daughters of citizens, to the attendants and knights of their court. Notwithstanding all these

privileges and concessions, the applications of the poor nobility for the daughters and widows of rich citizens were so urgent, that the princes were continually suffering themselves to be prevailed upon to reassert their claims to the disposal of rich heiresses and opulent females in cities.

This species of tyranny was practised even by the Burgundian princes, whose mildness and love of justice have been the theme of so much panegyric.* In many countries it was not more uncommon for nobles to marry the daughters of rich citizens,† than for persons of the highest rank to match with others who were several degrees below them.‡ Such being the con-

* "For at that time, throughout all the dominions of the Duke of Burgundy, no sooner did any merchant or artizan, or any citizen of a good city, or officer happen to die and leave a rich widow, then the duke, his son, or others of his people, would marry these widows to their archers and servants, &c.; and in like manner, when a man was rich and had a marriageable daughter, if he did not find her a husband while very young, he was served as I have mentioned above." *Mémoires de du Clercq.* ch. IV. p. 417, 418.

† Thus a Count of Geldres married the daughter of a rich merchant of Mechlin. *Froissart*, III. p. 263.

‡ It was not thought extraordinary, when at the commencement of the sixteenth century, for example, the widow of Louis XII. married the Duke of Suffolk. *Vie de Bayard*, p. 362. When the Duke of Lancaster married his former concubine, Katherine de Ruet, the females of the royal family raised indeed a great outcry, and agreed

sequence of cities and the privileges and prerogatives of the citizens, nothing was more natural than that kings and princes should invite their wives and daughters to their entertainments and balls; that princesses, and the female nobility should admit them to their parties and diversions; that the attendants, and gentlemen belonging to the courts, when unable to meet with females of noble birth, should turn their eyes to the wives and daughters of the citizens of the capitals; and that for these very reasons, the morals of the sex in the residence of princes should have been as corrupt, as those of the women of Vienna and other great capitals are described to have been in the fifteenth century.*

Respecting the balls at which the ladies appeared in their greatest glory, and had most opportunity for conversation with the knights, I shall select only a few circumstances which demonstrate the striking difference between the ancient and the present time. As dinner and supper were taken at a much earlier hour a few hun-

not to acknowledge, or to have any communication with her. The Duke of Lancaster, however, supported his new wife, who, as long as she lived, retained the first place after the queen.

* *Meiners Vergleichung des Mittelalters*, I. p. 258,

died years ago, than during the last and present century, so the balls likewise commenced and ended earlier than at the present day. At the time of the Chevalier Bayard,* it was thought very late to dance till one o'clock; but instances are not wanting in more ancient times of the pleasures of dancing having been prolonged till the return of Aurora.† The ball-rooms were illuminated only by larger or smaller wax-lights, held by knights and esquires. When persons of royal rank engaged in the dance, two knights danced before them with burning torches to make way for them, and to give them light.‡ This method of carrying torches was sometimes productive of fatal accidents. At a ball given by Charles VI. of France, the monarch, and five other young knights and gentlemen designed to appear in the character of savages, in linen shirts, having long shaggy locks fastened to them with pitch. The king ordered all the torch-bearers to retire from among the dancers, and to take their stations near

* *Vie de Bayard*, p. 49.

† *Froissart*, IV. p. 6.

‡ We are told, for instance, that when Frederic, King of the Romans, danced at the Court of Burgundy, "toujours deux Chevaliers à tout chacun une torche dansoyent devant lui eux tenans par la main."

the wall. Unfortunately the Duke of Orleans, attended by six torches, entered the hall, ignorant of the order, and of the disguise of the king. As soon as the six savages appeared, the duke advanced with his torches to light them. The pitched dresses took fire, and all the king's companions, except one, who leaped into a vessel full of water, miserably perished. What saved the king, was his being held on entering the hall by the Duchess of Berry, and being covered during the conflagration by the train of the princess's gown.* Masquerades were very rare; but when they were held, the greatest irregularities were usually committed, the honour of wives and virgins being attacked with the greatest boldness, and resigned with no less facility.†

* *Froissart*, IV. ch. 52. p. 271.

† See the description of one of these masquerades during the reign of Charles VI. in *St. Palaye*, II. p. 68.

CHAPTER II.

On the origin of the present European Courts; and on the first Appearance and constant Residence of Females at the Courts of the European Potentates.

Most of the revolutions which took place in the fifteenth century, were either commenced, or at least prepared in the preceding age. This observation also holds good with respect to the alteration in the condition of the fair sex, and of the changes in the states and courts, by which that alteration was produced. As early as the fifteenth century, the princes began to extend their authority, and to augment their revenues in an extraordinary degree; and to apply this enlargement of power and income, in part, to the purpose of giving extension to their establishments, and additional splendour to their courts. By these means, the most opulent of the nobility and gentry of either sex were attracted to the courts of the sovereigns;

and their continual residence at court produced most of the other changes, the ultimate effect of which was the present condition of the female sex.

In the fifteenth century, no regions of Europe were more flourishing, no subjects more happy, no princes more opulent, powerful, and respectable, than the dominions, inhabitants, and sovereigns of Burgundy.* Such, at least, was their situation till the period when Charles the

* "At that time the subjects of the house of Burgundy possessed great riches, on account of the long peace they had enjoyed through the goodness of the prince under whom they lived. He laid few taxes on his subjects; and I verily believe, that his dominions deserved the appellation of the Land of Promise, better than those of any other sovereign on the face of the globe. See *Comines*, p. 14 and 15; and again, p. 291. "I think I have seen, and know the greatest part of Europe: nevertheless, I know no country of equal, nor yet of much greater extent, which displays such opulence, either in the exterior or interior of the edifices, or that so abounds in all kinds of luxuries, festivities, and entertainments, as I there witnessed during the time of my residence in the country." Though the Burgundian dominions were so much happier than any other region, yet the same abuses prevailed there, even under Philip the Good, as in other countries, but in a smaller degree. "To tell the truth, justice was at that time so badly administered, that murders and robberies were committed without number; and no common man, whether artizan or tradesman, or any other person, durst venture to go abroad in the country without a spear, or a hatchet, or some other weapon, for fear of being attacked." *Du Clercq Mémoires*, p. 427.

Bold, by his ambition and obstinacy, originating in secret derangement, and at length degenerating into downright frenzy, involved his house, and his dominions in ruin. Charles equally aspired to the character of the most magnificent, and the most formidable prince of his age; to this end he raised his court to a pitch of splendour, which neither the Burgundian, nor still less any other European court had ever yet attained.* To the ducal chapel belonged no less than forty persons, all of whom were under the superintendence of the duke's confessor, who was a bishop.† His grooms of the chamber were equally numerous, exclusive of the inferior attendants, whose duty it was, among other things, to keep off the common people with white staves, whenever the duke appeared in public. Under the master of the horse were fifty equerries or esquires, and twelve pages, who always followed the

* "He was extremely pompous in dress, and rather too much so in every thing else. He paid very great honour to ambassadors, and other foreigners. He gave them a splendid reception and splendid entertainments. He was ambitious of acquiring great glory, and would fain have resembled those ancient princes, who have been so celebrated after their death." *Comines*, V. ch. 9. p. 289.

† See the *Extrait de l'Estat de la Maison du Duc Charles de Bourgogne, dit le Hardi, composé en* 1474 *par Olivier de la Marche*, II. p. 341.

duke on horseback, and waited upon him at table. Four surgeons and six physicians watched over the health of the duke, and it was the duty of the latter, in particular, to examine the quality of the food, which was served up to the prince. The number of chamberlains is not stated with precision by Olivier de la Marche, but he observes, that sixteen of them never quitted the apartments of the duke, and sometimes amused his leisure hours with singing, and at others with reading books of history and chivalry. Charles the Bold gave large annual pensions to six dukes, twelve other princes, counts, and marquisses, and one hundred and twenty barons and knights, to attend him whenever he required them, for the purpose of giving additional splendour to his court. The annual pensions of the six dukes, and the twelve other princes, counts and marquisses, alone exceeded two hundred thousand livres, though the ordinary expenditure of his household amounted to no more than four hundred thousand.* Charles had moreover a guard of horse, composed of one hundred and twenty

* "La dépense ordinaire de la Maison du Duc, montoit à quatre cens mille livres par an." *Oliv. de la Marche*, II. p. 343.

young noblemen, and a foot-guard of archers and pikemen. He had also in his retinue forty knights, each of whom was followed by a soldier on horseback, completely armed and accoutred.* But the characteristic ornament of Charles's court, was a brilliant train of female attendants, whose salaries amounted yearly to forty thousand crowns.† Even though the ladies did not accompany the duke and his court when he travelled, yet we may easily believe Olivier de la Marche, when he assures us that no city was large enough to accommodate the whole retinue of Charles the Bold. This prince not only augmented his court, but increased the number of provincial offices. A college of finance superintended the public revenue and expenditure; and every thing relative to the army and military affairs was committed to the management of the war-office. The domestic and foreign affairs were entrusted to the privy council, which was at the same time the supreme judicial

* "Quarante autres Chevaliers étoient gagés à l'année, chacun d'eux avoit un homme d'armes à sa suite." *Ibid.* p. 344.

† "Et on peut dire autant de l'état des Dames, et de leur pension, qui alloit à quarante mille écus." *Ibid.*

tribunal. The chancellor not only presided in the privy council, but had also the chief direction of the finances. The duke in person attended the privy council twice a week, accompanied by all the principal officers of his household. From these facts we might suppose that the annual expenditure of Charles the Bold must have exceeded two millions, at which sum it was estimated by Olivier de la Marche.*

Louis XI. of France, the greatest enemy of Charles the Bold, extorted much more from his subjects than his formidable opponent. He was also more generous than the Duke of Burgundy; but he expended his treasures not on magnificent palaces and a splendid court, but in the maintenance of numerous armies, and the construction of many strong fortresses.† He neglected his person even to the affectation of slovenliness, and contracted his own and his wife's establishment within much nar-

* *Olivier de la Marche*, II. p. 349.

† "But one good quality in our good master was, that he never locked up any thing in his treasury; he took all and spent all. He constructed large works for the fortification and defence of the cities and places of his kingdom; and did more in that way than all his predecessors." *Comines*, p. 332, 335.

rower limits than that of Charles VI. and Charles VII.*

It was Anne of Bretagne, the consort of Charles VIII. and afterwards of Louis XII. the first object of her attachment as she had been of his, that new-modelled the French court, which had heretofore been more like a camp than the abode of magnificence, pleasure, and beauty.† After her elevation to the throne of France, this princess still retained the government and revenues of her hereditary dominions,‡ and she was proud of the honour of being the sovereign Duchess of Bretagne.§ As a queen and independent princess, she formed such an establishment, as not only no queen, but even no king of France had ever yet had. In the first place, the num-

* "The household of Queen Charlotte, the wife of Louis XI. was much more contracted. She had for instance only two *pannetiers* and four *maitres d'hôtel*. But, it is well known that Louis XI. was not fond of pomp, and that he did not love his wife so well as to allow her a magnificent establishment, when he spent scarcely any thing himself." *Grand d'Aussi*, III. p. 302.

† "Our kings did not begin really to have a court, till queen Anne had drawn the ladies to it." *Grand d'Aussi*, III. p. 237.

‡ *Brantome Dames illust.* p. 8.

§ "Anne, notwithstanding her devotion, always retained on the throne a certain haughtiness, being desirous of personating not only the queen of France, but also the sovereign Duchess of Bretagne." *Grand d'Aussi*, III. p. 302.

ber of the principal officers of her court was as great, or even greater than the courts of any of the French monarchs before her time had contained.* She had a guard of honour equal to that of her husband, and principally composed of young gentlemen of Bretagne.† She moreover appointed and kept in her pay, a great number of female attendants, and supported a still greater number of gentlemen's daughters, who were sent to court from all the provinces of France, who were admirably brought up under her inspection, and through her care and favour, were better provided for than they could have been at home.‡ Louis XII. never gave audience to any foreign ambassador,

* " La maison d'Anne, etoit composée d'un grand Maitre d' hôtel, d'un premier Maitre d'hôtel, d'onze Maitre d'hôtel ordinaires, d'un premier Pannetier, de neuf autres Pannetiers, d'un premier Echanson, de sept autres Echansons, d'un premier Ecuyer-Tranchant, de quatre autres Tranchans, de treize Ecuyers, et de treize Officiers de cuisine, de cinq Officiers de panneterie, de quatre de fruiterie, de quatre Sommeliers, et de deux aides d'Echansonnerie, de quatre Clercs d'Office, enfin de trois Garde-Vaisselle. Pour son commun elle avoit cinq Ecuyers de Cuisine, dont un premier ; sept Officiers de panneterie, sept d'echansonnerie, et quatorze de cuisine." *Grand d'Aussi*, as above.

† *Brantome Dames illust.* p. 10. According to the Marshal de Fleuranges (p. 20.) the guards of Louis XII. were, however, more numerous.

‡ " Ce fut la premiere, qui commença à dresser la cour

or other person of distinction, without ordering him to be immediately conducted to the queen, that due honour might likewise be paid her.* Anne gave audience to foreign envoys, even when she was confined by sickness to her bed ;† and Brantome mentions, with commendation, that she could converse with ambassadors and other illustrious strangers like an eloquent princess. No title can be more glorious than that of father of his people, which the assembly of the states conferred not only unanimously, but with an affecting urgency on Louis XII.‡ The epithet of mother of the French nobility and of the poor, most justly merited by Anne of Bretagne, though less glorious, was however a

des Dames, que nous avons veüs depuis elle jusques à cette heure : car elle avoit une trés grande suitte, et de Dames et de filles, et n'en refusa aucunes ; tant s'en faut qu'elle s'enquéroit des gentilshommes leurs peres qui estoient à la cour, s'ils avoient des filles, et quelles elles estoient : sa cour etoit une fort belle escole pour les Dames ; car elle les faisoit bien nourrir, et sagement, et toutes à son modelle, se faisoient, et se faconnoient tres sages et vertueuses." *Brantome*, p. 9 and 10.

* " Depuis il ne venoit jamais en sa cour prince estrangeur ou ambassadeur qu'apres l'avoir veu et ouy, il ne l'envoyast faire la reverence a la Reyne, voulant qu'on lui portast le mesme respect, qu'a luy." *Brantome*, p. 11.

† Such was that which she gave in 1512, to Andrew de Burgo. *Lettres de Louis XII. et du Card. Amboise*, III. p. 258.

‡ *Ibid.* I. p. 44.

highly honourable distinction.* Under Louis XII. and Anne of Bretagne, France was more happy than it had been for ages, or than it again was during the sixteenth century. The intrigues and vices of Francis I, Henry II. and his sons, undermined for a whole century that prosperity which the kingdom had attained through the wisdom and clemency of Louis XII.†

Under Francis I. the nation was not in so prosperous a condition as under Louis XII. because the former extended the royal authority, and increased the volun-

* *Brantome*, as above.

† No penegyric can more highly extol the reign of Louis XII. than the following facts, stated by Bishop Claude de Seyssel in his comparison of Louis XI. and Louis XII. in the second volume of *Comines*, p. 299.

"We see large edifices, both public and private, built in every part of the kingdom; and they abound in gilding, not only on the cielings and walls that are within, but on the roofs, the turrets and images without. The houses are furnished much more sumptuously than ever they were, and people of all ranks use silver plate much more generally than they were used to do; so that it has been found necessary to enact a law to correct this luxury. For there is not any class of persons but what will have cups, goblets, ewers, and spoons, of silver at least; and with respect to prelates, lords, and others, they are not content with having all kind of plate, both for the table and kitchen of silver, unless it be gilt, and some even have it of massy gold. So also in their apparel and manner of living, they display much greater magnificence than was ever before seen." He adds that the price of land, the amount of the public revenue, and the commerce of the country had been more than doubled.

tary contributions in a much greater degree than any of his predecessors, and lavished the treasures and the blood of his subjects, in long and ruinous wars. Though Francis made his people much less happy than Louis XII. yet he augmented the standing army, the provincial offices, the royal household, and the splendour of his court. He surpassed all the French kings in the frequency and magnificence of his entertainments,* as well as in the number, profusion, and elegance of his tables, and equipage for the chace.† A small portion of the mischief which Francis I. occasioned by his general prodigality, he compensated by the extraordinary encouragement which he afforded to the arts and sciences. None of his predecessors erected so many, or such beautiful palaces, none furnished them with such taste and ex-

* *Brantome Hommes illustres*, I. p. 267.

† *Ibid.* I. p. 269. Quant à sa maison, jamais les ordinaires ny sales, ny tables n'en approcherent; car il avoit sa table, celle du grand maistre, du grand chambellan, des gentilshommes de sa chambre, des gentilshommes servans, des valets de chambre, et tant d'autres, et tres-bien servies, que rien n'y manquoit; et ce qui estoit tres rare c'est que dans un village, dans des forests, en l'assemblée, l'on y estoit traité comme si l'on eut eté dans Paris." Respecting the profusion of his hunting establishment, see *St. Palaye*, III. p. 299. Francis received the appellation of *Le Père de la Venerie*.

pence, and none so strongly excited among the nobility of his kingdom, a spirit of emulation in both these points, as Francis the First.* Much less honourable to himself and useful to his country were the pensions, the presents, the expensive and diversified amusements,† the urgent admonitions to fathers and husbands, nay, even the illicit arts‡ by which he endeavoured to entice to, and assemble at his

* *Brantome Hommes illustres*, I. p. 267, 268, 274. *Carloix*, I. p. 219. "Francois le Grand, n'a laissé de bastir dix ou douze chasteaux et maisons de la plus superbe structure, qu'il y ait en toute l'Enrope; et si admirables à cause de leur varieté, que les architectes de toutes nations les viennent contempler pour y apprendre. De sorte qu'il n' y a roy ni monarche sur la terre, qui soit logé en si grande majesté, qui le roy de France. Ayant les roys qui lui ont succedé, les princes, prelats, grands seigneurs, riches gentilshommes, et autres gens de moyen de ce royaume, si bien fait batir, a son imitation, que la France se peut vanter d'estre la plus decorée d'excellentes et magnifiques maisons, que tout autre royaume, qui soit sous le ciel.

† *Brantome*, as above, I. p. 267. "Il n' y avoit nopces grandes qui se fissent en cour, qui ne fussent solemnisées ou de tournois, ou de combats, ou de mascarades, ou d'habillimens fort riches, tant d'hommes que de Dames, les quelles en avoient de lui de grandes livrées. J'ay veu des coffres, et garderobes d'aucunes dames de ce temps-la si pleines de robes que le roy leur avoit données en telles magnificences et festes, que c'etoient une tres grande richesse."

‡ Of this description were the arts by which the Countess de Chateaubrian was brought to court. *Galant. des Rois de France*, II. p. 4.

court, the most beautiful females from every part of his dominions. Intelligent contemporaries censured him for making the court the usual abode of women of rank, and thereby rendering it a theatre and model of every species of seduction and dissipation for the whole kingdom.* This charge, none but such a courtly vindicator and panegyrist of princes and princesses as Brantome, could seek to invalidate as he does, in the following manner:†

"With regard to the ladies, it must be acknowledged, that formerly they came but seldom, and in small number to court. Queen Anne, indeed, began to assemble more ladies at her court than the queens her predecessors; but it was Francis I. who endeavoured to people the court with ladies, much more than it had ever yet been, because he was convinced that they are the only ornament of courts, and that a court without ladies, is like a garden without flowers, and rather resembles the court of an eastern satrap, or despot,

* "Un grand prince le blasma pour avoir introduit en la cour les grandes assemblées, abords et residence ordinaire des dames." *Brantome Hommes illustres*, I. p. 277, 278.

† *Ibid.*

than that of a Christian monarch. Had the king collected a multitude of lewd women, such as Heliogabalus assembled in his imperial palace, he would have afforded just cause for censure. The ladies of his court, on the contrary, were all wives and daughters belonging to reputable houses, who appeared at the court of their king like the goddesses of old upon Olympus. If some of them bestowed the last favours on their lovers, how could the king help that? He left each to defend her own fortress, and if one or another suffered her's to be surprized, it was not his fault. I would ask whether it was more praise-worthy in the king to collect so brilliant an assemblage of ladies about his court, or to have trodden in the steps of his more ancient predecessors, and to have suffered a multitude of courtezans to follow his train, under the superintendance of an officer called the *Roy de Ribaux*, who assigned them their places of abode, and protected them from violence. In my opinion, this public defiance of decency must be much more dangerous than the secret and discreet love of our ladies, who were sound and clean, and who never rendered the king's attendants unfit for his service, as is but too frequently the case

with brothels.* But, says the prince, above alluded to, if the morals of the ladies belonging to the court alone had been corrupted, it would not have signified so much: but the other females took a pattern from them, not only in their apparel, their fashions, their dancing, and other accomplishments, but also in the dissoluteness of their lives:—as if," continues Brantome, "there had before been no lewd women in the higher, middling, and lower classes, either in private houses or at court.† I never, indeed, myself saw the court of the great king, but still I am of opinion, that a better custom could not

* "Il me semble que tel putanisme debordé et publie, et tout plein de verole, ne pouvoit estre si bien, qu'un secret, diseret et eaché lieu de nos dames, qui estoient tres nettes et saines, au moins aucunes, et qui ne gastoient ni rendoient les gentilshommes impuissans comme celles de bordels, dont puis après le roy n'en etoit d'eux mieux servy."

† "Mais disoit ce prince, s'il n'y eust eu, que ces dames de cour, qui se fussent debauchées, c'eust eté tout un, mais elles donnoient tel exemple aux autres de la France; que se façonnans sur leurs habits, leurs graces, leurs façons, leurs dances, et leurs vies, elles se vouloient aussi façonner à aimer et paillarder, voulans dire par la, à la cour on s'habille ainsi, on danse ainsi, on y paillarde ainsi, nous en pouvons faire ainsi, comme si auparavant le regne du roy François il n'y eust eu des putains par toute la France, aussi bien des grandes, moyennes, petites, que communes, et aussi bien en leur païs et maisons qu'ailleurs." *Brantome Hommes illustres*, I. p. 281.

possibly be introduced, than the constant residence of ladies at court. I have often accompanied our kings when they took short journies without ladies. But when we had been parted but a week from the dear creatures and their charming eyes, this short period of separation appeared as long as a year. We wished most ardently to return to the court, not regarding as the court, the place where the king was, but that where the queen and the ladies resided.* It is not sufficient to have about you many princes and great generals, courtiers and counsellors, and to hear them converse on the subject of war, or public affairs, or the chase, or to play at different kinds of games with them. All recreations and amusements soon tire, but of the society of fair ladies one can never be weary. If a gentleman was obliged to go to the wars, or to undertake a distant journey, what could be more agreeable, than to take with him a pledge of love from his mistress into the service of his prince, to venture his life in honour of his fair one, and on his return to be

* N'appellans la cour bien souvent là, où estoient le Roy, mais où estoit la Reyne, et les Dames.

received with more ardent and more loving embraces? Our great king was accustomed to say, that the love of the ladies inspired his nobles with no less valour than the strength of their swords. In a word, a court without ladies, is a court and no court." *

Notwithstanding the dissolute manners of the ladies who lived at the court of Francis I. the queen's maids† were kept within very circumscribed limits. They lived and slept under the superintendence of elderly ladies or governesses, in separate apartments which no gentleman durst enter. They could neither marry, nor even converse with gentlemen who courted their hands, without the permission of the queen; and this dependence gave occasion to much unmerited persecution.‡ On fast-days the queen's maids never made their appearance at all, probably for this reason that, according to the etiquette of the courts of France and Burgundy, no assemblies could be held either in the apartments of the king or

* Pour fin une Cour sans Dames, est une cour sans cour, pour dire le vray.

† "Les filles de la Reine."

‡ *Nouvelles de la Reine de Navarre*, II. p. 7.

duke, or in those of the queen or duchess.*

Nearly in the same degree as Francis I. surpassed Louis XII. and Anne of Bretagne in the splendour of his court, was he himself surpassed by Henry II. and his consort Catharine de Medicis, who both piqued themselves on treading in the steps of their illustrious predecessor. The principal promoter of the increasing splendour and licentiousness of the court, was Catharine de Medicis, first in quality of reigning queen, and afterwards in that of queen-mother, during the reigns of her three sons, Francis II. Charles IX. and Henry III.† The expensive tables‡ and hunting-establishment,§ the construction and improvement of palaces were continued

* "On ne mangeoit point de chair, ains on mangeoit du poisson, et à celle cause n'y eut nulle assemblée. *Olivier de la Marche*, II. p. 178.

† "Cette Reyne faite de la main de ce grand roy François qui avoit introduit cette belle bombance n'a voulu rien oublier, ny laisser de ce qu'elle avoit appris mais l'a voulu tousjours imiter, voire surpasser et luy ay veu dire trois ou quatre fois en ma vie sur ce sujet." *Brantome Dames illustres*, p. 107.

‡ "Le feu roy son fils et successeur les entretint de mesmes que luy." *Brantome Hommes illust.* I. p. 272.

§ *St Palaye*, p. III. 299. and *Brantome Hommes illust.* II. p. 45.

under Henry II. as they had been under Francis I.* The entertainments and diversions of the court were more frequent and more diversified;† the concourse of ladies was much greater, and the intercourse with the female attendants much more free than during the reign of the last-mentioned monarch. Catharine de Medicis had continually about her person a company of at least three hundred females of noble extraction; a number, which, as Brantome himself observes, was seldom exceeded on the grand court-days held by more ancient sovereigns twice or thrice a year, after which they again returned to their mansions or their cities.‡ This company of ladies attended the queen, not only from one palace to another, but even in long journies and in war.§ Whether the queen was at Paris,

* *Brantome Hommes illust.* II. 83.

† *Dames illust.* p. 45, 48, 82, 83, 87.

‡ "Mais quoy ces belles et grandes assemblées et compaignies ne se faisoient, ny ne se jouoient que trois ou quatre fois l'an, et puis au partir de la feste se departoient et se retiroient en leurs terres et maisons jusqu'à a une autrefois." *Dames illust. de Brantome,* p. 90. A list of the ladies at the court of Catharine de Medicis is given as above, p. 92. 100---104.

§ *Ibid.* "Mais la cour de notre Roi Henry II. et de notre Reyne estoit ordinaire tant en guerre qu'en paix, fut ou pour resider, ou pour demeurer en un lieu pour

or in the contiguous palaces, or travelling, or in camp, her own apartments, as well as those of her ladies and maids of honour, were continually open, and to both the gentlemen belonging to the court had unrestrained access.* The French courtiers were certainly in the right, when they asserted that no other court could shew so many beautiful and amiable females, as that of Henry II. and his consort†; when they styled the court of Queen Catharine a real Paradise, in which the ladies on grand festivals had the appearance of supernatural beings‡; when they lamented, after the death of the queen,

quelques mois, fut, qu'elle se remuast en autre maison de plaisance, et chateaux de nos rois, qui n'en ont point de faute, et en ont plus que roy du monde. Cette belle et grande compaignie tousjours ou moins la plus grande part, marchoit et alloit avec la reyne; si d'ordinaire pour le moins sa cour estoit pleine plus de trois cens dames et damoiselles."

* "Sa chambre n'estoit nullement fermée aux honnestes dames, et honnestes gens, voire à tous et à toutes, ne la vouloit ressерrer à la mode d'Espagne, ny d' Italie son pays---disant que tout ainsi que le Roy François son beaupère qu'elle honoroit fort, la luy avoit dressée et fait libre, qu'elle la vouloit ainsi entretenir a la vraye Françoise." *Brantome Dames illust.* p. 88. "Le comte de Sault alloit souvent en la chambre des filles de la reyne." *Carloix*, III. p. 351.

† *Brantome Dames Galantes*, I. p. 312.

‡ *Ibid. Dames Illustres*, p. 88, 89.

that the French court was no longer a court, and that France would never again have such a queen-mother.*

Henry II. and his consort confirmed and augmented the glory which Louis XII. and Francis I. had acquired, that the French monarchs were the most powerful sovereigns in Christendom, and the French court the most magnificent of any in Europe; and from this period the French nation was more jealous and more proud of the grandeur of their kings, and the splendour of their courts, than of any other pre-eminence.† The French ambassadors and generals that were sent in the middle of the sixteenth century, either to Germany,‡ to England,§ or to Italy,

* *Ibid.* p. 89. "Bref sa cour a esté telle que quand elle a esté morte on a dit par vive voix de tous, que la cour n'estoit plus la cour, et que jamais plus il n'y auroit en France une reyne mere."

† "Par toutes lesquelles despences --comprenant la valeur et la richesse de p esents,---on peult bien juger, que la grandeur d'ung roy de France surpasse et excelle tous aultres roys, et n'y en a aulcun, en tout c'est univers qui luy soit comparable." *Carloix* II. p. 229. The same writer adds, that on account of the magnificent entertainment and the rich presents, the most illustrious German princes and nobles even fought for the honour of being appointed ambassadors to the court of France. "Les plus grands seigneurs de leur pays briguent a vive force ceste charge et se battent à la perche pour y etre preferez."

‡ *Carloix* III. p. 309. 322.

§ *Ibid.* I. p. 302. II. p. 117, 118.

every where found a certain degree of penury, and in particular badly furnished tables, among persons of equal and even of superior rank. Foreigners, on the contrary, were astonished at the pomp of the French, and still more at the abundance, the elegance, and the richness of their table and their plate.* All the European princes acknowledged the superiority of that nation in the art of cookery, and in the arrangement and decoration of the table, by sending to France for cooks and other servants belonging to the kitchen.† The princes of Germany, and other foreign countries, were struck with inexpressible astonishment, when they visited the court of France and beheld the sumptuous tables, the hunting-parties and entertain-

* *Ibid.* I. p. 430. "Aussi à la verité la despense du François est de tout tems bien aultre, que celle non seulement de l' Italien, mais de toute austre nation."

† "Quant aux cheres magnifiques, personne ne peut ignorer, puisque c'estoit en la maison d'un roy de France, qu'elles ne fussent incomparables et nonpareilles; car les aultres roys de la chrestienté, voire de l'univers, n'approchent nullement de nos excellentes delicatesses; ny singuliéres façons de triompher en festins, ny leurs officiers, de si friandement, et proprement accoustrer les viandes, ny les desguiser, comme les nostres; n'en voulant aultre temoignage, que tous les princes estrangiers envoyent chercher de cuisiniers et pasticiers en France, et aultres serviteurs pour l'usaige de bouche, et tout service de table." *Carloix* II. p. 112.

ments of the French kings.* In a numerous embassy of German princes, lords, and deputies, sent by the imperial cities in 1551, to Paris, a Count of Nassau was the only individual that understood French.† In a few years, however, the splendour of the court procured the French language as many admirers as it had before gained the French cookery. During the reign of Henry the Second's sons there was not a family of distinction or respectability in Germany, England, and the other civilized countries of our division of the globe, but what kept a teacher of the French language.‡ Francis I. Henry II. and his sons had in constant pay many thousands of German troops, both infantry and cavalry, who were commanded by German princes and nobles. All these, on their return to their native country, carried back with them not only French money, but likewise French manners and the French

* Respecting the splendid hunting parties of Henry II. to which the German princes were utter strangers, see *Carloix* II. p. 227; and for a description of the tables and balls, II. p. 223, 225. "Puis furent amenez en la grande salle qu'ils trouverent si richement parée, et le couvert de quatre longues tables, si bien ordonné, qu'ils en tomberent en une inexprimable admiration."

† *Carloix*, II. p. 161.

‡ *Œuvres de Pasquier*, II. p. 5 and 6.

language. Hence it was perfectly natural that from the middle of the sixteenth century the court and the grandees of France should gradually become the models, after which the German courts and German nobility formed themselves.

Before I quit the court of Henry II. and his consort, I must not forget to notice two singularities in etiquette. From the time of Louis XI. and especially of Francis I. the royal authority had been extended to such degree, that it scarcely appeared to be susceptible of farther accession or greater abuse. In the same proportion and with the same rapidity as the power of the sovereign increased, the exterior reverence paid to the monarch diminished. Toward the conclusion of the fifteenth century, powerful, independent princes, and even princesses, knelt before the French kings, and the heirs apparent to the throne. So soon as the year 1547, the practice of kneeling before the kings, had fallen into such disuse in France, that this homage was not paid to the sovereign even by the pages who waited on him at table; and M. de Vielleville and his companions, were filled with the utmost astonishment at the tyranny of the English kings, and the sla-

very of their nobles, when they observed that the highest officers of the crown waited on young Edward at table on their knees.* The celebrated d'Aubigné, and other deputies of the Hugonots, who were to be presented to Queen Mary de Medicis, refused to honour her by bending the knee, because the deputation was entirely composed of gentlemen and ecclesiastics, who owed her majesty a profound inclination of the body, but not the homage of genuflection.† Not much less inconsistent than the augmentation of the royal authority, and the decrease of exterior reverence, was the unrestrained association of both sexes at court, and their separation when at table. Henry II. and the gentlemen of his court, always dined at distinct tables from those of the queen and

* "Knights of the order of the garter waited at table, and on approaching it, they fell upon their knees. We thought it extremely strange to see aged knights, men of approved valour, and great captains, of the most illustrious families in England, thus performing a service which is rendered to our kings by the pages, who are only bare-headed when they attend upon them. But they never kneel, and only bow on entering and leaving the apartment in which the repast is held." *Carloix*, I. p. 234. See also *Mémoir. partic.* p. 115.

† ---- "qui ne devoient à leurs majestez, que la reverence et non la genuflexion." *Mém. d'Aubigné*, p. 167.

her ladies.* The same etiquette was likewise observed when the whole court paid a visit to the Marshal de Vielleville at Durestal. M. de Vielleville entertained the king, the princes, and the gentlemen of the court, while his wife treated the queen, the princesses, their ladies, and attendants.

After the death of her husband, Catharine de Medicis continued to keep up the same establishment as during the time of Henry II. The courts of her two younger sons and their consorts were widely different. Francis II. retained the same tables as had been established by his father and grandfather. On the contrary, Charles IX. and Henry III. were often compelled by civil commotions, and the latter, in particular, by the excessive prodigality of his favourites, to contract the expences of his table to such a degree, that the attendants on the court were in general obliged to fast.† It was to this cir-

* "Ce qui rendoit la chere tres admirable, estoit, que si le maistre traictoit les hommes, Madame de Vielleville s'estoit chargée de faire le semblable aux femmes; et tenoit maison aux princesses, dames d'honneur, d'atour, gouvernantes, et filles de la Royne." *Carloix*, II. p. 107, 108.

† "Les autres deux roys Charles, et Henry troisieme entretinrent tres mal leurs tables; le plus souvent le mar-

cumstance that the King of Spain alluded, on receiving information that Henry III. had threatened to declare war against him. "I am not afraid," replied the haughty Spaniard, "of being invaded by a king who seldom has any thing to eat."* The example of the queen-mother was not followed by Elizabeth of Austria and Louisa of Lorraine, the consorts of Charles IX. and Henry III. who were accustomed to keep their apartments, and those of their ladies, shut.† No king surpassed Henry III. in the creation, and sale of places at court and civil offices. If by this conduct he increased for a time the concourse to his court, it was, however, but of short duration, because he was soon obliged by the general outcry of the people, or by necessity, to suppress most of the places which

mite se renversoit." *Brantome Hommes illust.* I. p. 272, 3. Excepting these necessitous intervals, Henry III. carried the refinements and ceremonious etiquette of the table to a much higher pitch than his father and grandfather. *Journal de Henry III.* Vol. IV. p. 132. 133.

* "Il respondit, qu'l ne le craignoit pas, car la plus-part du tems *no tenia da comer.*"

† "Elle (Catharine de Medicis) ne la vouloit reserrer à la mode d'Espagne ny d'Italie son pays, ny mesme comme nos autres reynes Elizabeth d'Austriche et Louise de Lorraine ont fait." *Brantome Dames illust.* p. 88.

he had created.* The unbounded licentiousness which Francis I. and Catharine de Medicis had so greatly contributed to promote, began to be restrained by the more formal etiquette which Henry III. introduced, and by which he sought to heighten the majesty of the crown.† At audiences, and on other extraordinary occasions, he remained, after the example of the Spanish and Oriental monarchs, motionless as a statue, an attitude which, in the eyes of the French, was not much calculated to command respect, and which lost all its effect through the effeminate dress‡ and frivolous occupations of the king.§

* "Nothing is more grievous to this kingdom than the multitude of offices with which the king had burdened it, in order to raise money. He had one hundred and fifty chamberlains, but all of them are now dismissed, except sixteen. It is thought that the same course will be adopted with respect to them, to the great relief of the people, whose shoulders were obliged to bear the whole of this burden." *Busbequii Opera.* p. 535

† *Œuvres de Pasquier*, II. p. 414.

‡ *Etoile Journal de Henry III.* Vol. I. p. 183. 204.

§ *Ibid.* p. 179. See also *Mémoires de Sully*, I. p. 103. "I shall never forget the strange attitude and dress in which I found thisprince in his cabinet. He had his sword by his side, a cloak over his shoulders, a collegian's cap on his head, a basket full of puppies suspended by a broad ribbon from his neck; and he remained like a statue, mov-

Henry IV. broke all the shackles of etiquette with which his predecessors had sought to bind even kings themselves, or to place a wide gulph between the monarch and his attendants. Happy would it have been had he transgressed no other laws than those of etiquette! Henry ate and drank, jested and played with his confidants as one comrade with another.* He often surprized his friends by a visit shortly before the hour of dinner, and not only partook of the repast, but spent one or more nights in their houses.† At the commencement of his reign, he was often reduced to such streights that he was obliged to make himself an uninvited guest at the tables of others, that he might not suffer hunger. After he had vanquished his enemies, and Sully had arranged his finances, he restored the table, the hunting establishment, and all the other amusements of the court, with the

ing neither his head, his feet, nor his hands while he spoke to us."

* Of this confidental intercourse of Henry IV. with his officers and courtiers, we no where find more numerous and more striking instances than in the *Mémoires d Aubigné.*

† The place to which he paid the most frequent visits of this kind, was the house of Lamet, with whom he generally played. *Sully*, II. p. 330.

same degree of splendour, by which they had been distinguished during the reigns of Francis I. and Henry II.* This expence Henry IV. incurred in honour, not of his wife, but of his mistresses, for whose sakes he violated all the laws of virtue and the church, of prudence and decorum, in a more flagrant manner than any other king of France ever did. Because the king indulged himself without the least restraint in love, the gentlemen and ladies of his court thought themselves entitled to the same liberty; and hence arose a corruption of manners which will be an everlasting disgrace to the reign of Henry IV. If this licentiousness now and then met with a check, or its ebullitions sometimes experienced punishment, the king was not the occasion either of the one or the other. In 1604, the Baron de Termes was found in the chamber of one of the queen's maids of honour, in bed with her, and on a closer examination, the lady proved to be pregnant. This discovery so highly offended the queen Mary de Medicis, that she begged the king to order the seducer to be beheaded; but by a speedy flight he

* This restoration of the royal establishment was approved even by Cardinal Richelieu. *Testam. polit.* I. p. 256.

escaped all farther punishment. The lady was expelled from court in the most ignominious manner, and the queen would have treated her with still greater severity, had not Henry interposed his authority.* In 1608, the king invited a company of actors from Italy, who principally played in the arsenal at Paris. By the command of the Duc de Sully, besides a spacious pit, several rows of boxes were erected one above another for the accommodation of the spectators. Two of these rows were appropriated to the ladies of the court. The rigid Sully would not permit any gentleman to enter the boxes set apart for the ladies; and on account of this re-

* "La reine s'en sentoit si fort offensée, qu'elle pria le roy de lui faire trancher la tête. La Sagonne fut ignominieusement chassée, et maltraitée de la reine, et l'eut eté pis, si le roy ne se fut mis entre deux, et interposé en ce fait son autorite." *Etoile*, III. p. 171. Considering the queen's severity on this occasion, it cannot fail to excite surprize that she should have sent her maids thrice to the wounded Marshal de Bassompierre to amuse him. *Mém.* I. p. 140, 49. I cannot tell how many visits I received during my wound, and principally from ladies. All the princesses came to see me, and the queen thrice sent her maids under the care of Mademoiselle de Guise to spend whole afternoons with me." In the early years of the reign of Louis XIV. the apartments of the *filles de la Reine* were so inaccessible to all gentlemen, and to the king himself, that he could only converse through a chink with one of these ladies, for whom he had conceived an esteem. *Motteville*, V. p. 272.

straint the courtiers did not for a long time take such pleasure in these theatrical exhibitions as the king had expected.*

During the regency of the queen-dowager Mary de Medicis, the profusion of the court and of the favourites increased to an incredible degree, while the treasures lasted which Henry IV. had amassed for the execution of his great projects.† Under Louis XIII. and during the regency of queen Anne of Austria, the court assumed a totally different form. Louis XIII. was the slave of Cardinal Richelieu,‡ who was not insensible to the charms of the fair sex, but preferred a secret commerce with courtezans to a troublesome attendance on ladies of the

* "Deux de ces galeries etoient destinées pour les femmes; aucun homme n'y entroit avec elles: c'etoit un point de ma police, que je ne souffrois pas qu'on renversat, et dont je ne regardois pas au dessous de moi, de prendre moimême le soin.---Tous les courtisans ne trouvoient nulle part autant d'agrémens dans les spectacles de theatre." *Sully*, III. p. 53, 54.

† Such was the extravagance of this period, that the parliament was urgently desirous to prohibit the prophanation of gold and silver plate, which were used for the most common culinary utensils. *Hist. de la Mere, et du Fils.* I. p. 331.

‡ "Faisant de son maitre son esclave, et de cet illustre esclave un des plus grands monarques du monde." *Motteville*, I. p. 72.

court* ; who exiled the queen-mother, and till his death continued to persecute the reigning queen, who had rejected his love,† and to keep her at a distance from the king. Had Louis XIII. not fallen into the mighty hands of his great minister, he would still have retained unworthy favourites, such as de Luynes and St. Mars, but the natural coldness of his constitution and his gloomy devotion would always have preserved him from that kind of attachment to women, by which the splendour of the court might have been augmented.‡ While Richelieu increased the royal authority to an extent that astonished all Europe, and established it on an immove-

* " Ses galanteries en verité ne répondoient en rien à la grandeur de ses actions, ni à l'eclat de sa vie. Marion de Lorme, qui etoit un peu moins qu'une prostituée, fut un des objets de son amour, et elle le sacrifia à des Barreaux. Madame de Frages, que vous voyez trainante dans les cabinets sous le nom de vielle femme en fut une autre. La premiere venoit chez lui la nuit ; il alloit ausi la nuit chez la seconde qui etoit deja un reste de Buckingham et de l'Epienne. *Mem. du Card. de Retz.* I. p. 10. See also *Galant. des Rois de France*, III. p. 122, 125, 149, 180.

† A mischievous lady delivered a letter intended for the young queen, to the queen-mother, who was previously exasperated against him. *De Retz.* I. p. 9, 10. *Motteville*, I. p. 35.

‡ *Motteville*, I. p. 51, 77, 82, 396.

able basis, the gloomy monarch suffered the pomp which ought to surround the throne of kings to dwindle away to such a degree, that his court rather resembled a prison, or a convent, than the residence of his predecessors. In the court-tables, such was the deterioration, that not even the grooms of the chamber and common yeomen, much less the princes of the blood and the first officers of the household, who, during the reign of Henry IV. had constantly eaten at court, could partake of their cheer; and the table of the king himself was not served by pages or gentlemen, but by mere dirty scullions.*

During the regency of the queen-dowager, Anne of Austria, the gloomy air and slovenly habits which Lowis XIII. had diffused around him, disappeared; but the splendour and the diversions of the court were but a few degrees superior. The regent, from a love of ease, had an equal aversion to parade and to business, and was glad to relinquish both to Cardinal Mazarin, who despised, or affected to despise the ladies, and only once gave a sup-

* *Testament du Card. de Richelieu*, I. p. 256.---"par de simples et sales mamitons."

per to a few of them, because he could not send them away hungry.* Anne of Austria was a lover of theatrical exhibitions, and the stage was therefore the only object on which Mazarin allowed any expence to be incurred for the pleasure of the court.†

The reign of Louis XIII. and the regency of his widow, Anne of Austria, demonstrate, that after the courts of princes had once become the usual abode of the ladies, the sentiments and habits of monarchs and their vicegerents might indeed determine the greater or less degree of splendour, the frequency or rarity of public festivities and diversions, and the immediate influence of the women upon the sovereign, but that they were incapable of making any essential alteration in the state of things produced by the continual residence of females at court. The administrations of the Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarin comprehended the space of nearly half a century, (from 1624 to

* "C'est le seul regal qu'il nous ait fait en sa vie; qui ne fut pas grand. Il nous traita avec beaucoup d'indifference et de froideur. Il meprisoit les Dames et ne croiait pas, qu'elles fussent dignes de son estime." *Motteville*, I. p. 429.

† *Ibid.* I. p. 409, 410.

1661,) during which those to whom the highest authority belonged, as well as they who actually possessed it, were the most decided adversaries of the other sex, or at least of all the pretension of the ladies to interfere in the affairs of the court and state; and yet the administrations of those two statesmen form epochs not less remarkable in the history of the female sex, than in the annals of the French nation. Though Louis XIII. Richelieu and Mazarin, had neither wives to whom they were attached, nor favourite mistresses among the ladies of the court, and though Anne of Austria had no professed lover among the gentlemen attendant on it, yet the princes of the blood, the officers of state and courtiers continued their assiduities to the ladies, and the latter still employed all their arts to make conquests among the gentlemen. The court certainly lost something of its exterior splendour, because Louis XIII. Anne of Austria, and their two ministers, seldom gave public entertainments or other brilliant festivities; but nevertheless, neither the daily or frequent assemblages of the nobility of both sexes, nor the magnificent dinners, the suppers, the balls and other diversions were discontinued, but on the contrary

they were incessantly kept up in the palaces of the princes and of the great. This being the case, we need not be surprized that during the very administration of Cardinal Mazarin, who either felt or at least affected the greatest contempt for the other sex, the ladies acted a more important part than they had ever done, even under Francis I. Henry II. and Henry IV.

As the increased power and revenues of the French kings occasioned the constant residence of ladies at their courts; so this same concentration of the nobility about the court or in the capital, together with the changes which had taken place in the art of war, produced many alterations in the amusements of the court, which are not unworthy of a brief notice.

Among the diversions of the grand court-days in ancient times the tournaments deserve the first rank. As early as the fourteenth and fifteenth century these tournaments, so far from being bloody and dangerous combats, were rather pompous exhibitions, in which the eyes of the spectators were charmed with the magnificence and variety of the dresses, arms, and accoutrements, with the beauty of the knights and their stately steeds, and finally

with the strength, agility and dexterity of the champions. By their strong armour the combatants were so securely covered in every part of the body, that even in tournaments which lasted for several successive weeks, and in which many lances were daily broken, both in the morning and afternoon, it was very rarely indeed that any person was killed or wounded.* It was considered as an extraordinary misfortune, if one knight broke another's visor; and the worst of ordinary accidents, was, when a knight received so severe a shock from the lance of his opponent as to throw him back upon his horse, or hurl him to the ground. The victory and the prize of victory were not purchased at the expence of blood and wounds, but were obtained by the lances broken against the armour of an antagonist. These favourite diversions of the age of chivalry were common during the reign of Francis I.† and even that of Henry II. though they were more frequently given by private

* For instance, the famous tournament given by the celebrated Boucicaut, and his companions at Calais, in 1389. *Froissart*, IV. p. 20, 28. So also the tournament of the Bastard of Burgundy. *Olivier de la Marche*, II. p. 195.

† See *la Vie de Bayard*.

individuals than by kings and princes, who no longer lavished on them that profuse magnificence which had been displayed in the fourteenth and fifteenth century. The use, not only of artillery, but also of portable fire-arms, gradually gained ground, and daily rendered the ancient and cumbersome weapons and armour more and more unserviceable.* As these arms and accoutrements fell into disuse, so also those combats, in which they had been employed, became less frequent. Under Henry II. all the *gens d'armes* and their officers could not appear at tournaments armed and equipped as knights, but only those who had been formed by men such as M. de Vielleville.† On the contrary, so early as the year 1548, most of the gentlemen of France were so unskilful in the use of the arms and in the exercises of the knights, that at tournaments they were the objects of general ridicule. It proceeded from

* The greatest shock received by the ancient *Gendarmerie*, and the use of the weapons and armour of the knights, was from the German cavaliers, who were denominated by the French *Pistoliers*, from the weapons which they carried. See *Montluc Mém.* IV. p. 148. *Brantome Hommes illust.* III. p. 38. 45. 50. 52. 207. 209.

† *Carloix*, II. p. 33. 216.

downright awkwardness in the Count de Montgomery, that Henry II. who was very fond of the sports of chivalry, and was himself extremely adroit, received a mortal wound in the eye from the splinter of a broken lance.* In St. Palaye's opinion, this fatal accident was neither the cause nor the epoch of the discontinuance of tournaments and the exercises of chivalry.† Henry III. held tournaments, at which he appeared in the habiliments of an Amazon ;‡ and during the reign of Henry IV. the principal gentlemen of the court gave a tournament in 1605, in which Marshal de Bassompierre was dangerously wounded by the Duc de Guise. This tournament was the last in France, in which the combatants used sharp weapons; and de Bassompierre's wound was the real cause of the suppression of this mimicry of the combats of chivalry,‖ for the last tournament was in fact nothing more. The spectacles that were

* *Carloix*, IV. p. 174.

† *Ibid.* II. p. 39.

‡ *Etoile*, I. p. 183.-----" au Roy, lequel cependant vestu en amazone couroit la bague."

‖ " Le Roy dès que je fus blessé, fit cesser les tournois, et ne permist qu'aucun autre courust depuis. Cette course de champ ouvert ayant esté la seule, qui ayt esté faite cent ans auparavant en France, et n'a esté recommencée depuis. *Mém. de Bassomp.* I. p. 139.

soon afterwards substituted in their stead,* were rather exercises and exhibitions of skill in riding, than shadows of the ancient tournaments, displaying neither the arms and equipage nor the conflicts usual in those diversions of chivalry.

The entertainments on grand court-days, in more remote ages, were certainly more splendid than those of later times; not from the greater abundance and superior mode of preparing the dishes, the magnificence of the plate and utensils, or more brilliant decorations of the table; but from the different kinds of spectacles with which the guests were entertained and surprised. These spectacles at the tables of princes and the great, in France were called *entremêts*, and consisted either of the combats of knights, the mechanical tricks of automata, or finally, of theatrical, or pantomimic representations of celebrated events, and achievements of former times. At an entertainment given to the ladies by Charles VI. of France, two knights, Regnaud de Roye, and Messire Boucicaut, rode, during the repast into the hall, and broke a lance with each other. Having finished their com-

* *Mém. de Bassomp.* I. p. 269, 270.

bat, they were followed by several other knights, who did the same.* At a banquet given by Charles V. in 1378, the departure of Godfrey de Bouillon for the Holy Land, and the taking of Jerusalem were represented during the entertainment.† At the feast given by Charles VI. on the arrival of his consort, Isabel of Bavaria, the siege of Troy was exhibited.‡ A prodigious fortress was seen with four towers at the sides, and a fifth in the middle. The coats of arms and shields affixed to the walls shewed that this fortress was the city of Troy, and that the tower in the centre was the citadel of Ilium. Not far from it was perceived a spacious tent, the arms of which denoted the Greek besiegers. Beside this tent was a ship capable of containing at least one hundred warriors. Both the fortress, the tent, and the ship were moved by wheels, but the springs and the persons who directed them were concealed.—A violent conflict took place between the Grecian heroes in the tent and

* *Froissart*, IV. ch. I. p. 8.

† *Grand d'Aussy*, III. p. 321. That author considers these *entremêts* as the first that are mentioned in history.

‡ *Froissart*, IV. p. 5, & 6.

in the ship, and the Trojans in the fortress, but it was not of long duration, for the crowd and the heat arising from it were so great, that several persons were suffocated and still more crushed or otherwise hurt.

The Burgundian court gave a decided preference to the exhibitions of automata and the representations of animals. At the entertainment given on occasion of the nuptials of Charles the Bold with the English princess Margaret, three *entremêts* made their appearance. A great unicorn first entered with a leopard on his back. In one paw the leopard held the arms of England and in the other a daisy, *(marguerite)*. Having paraded round all the tables, the unicorn at length stood still opposite the duke, and a *Maitre d'Hotel* took the daisy from the leopard, and presented it with a complimentary speech to the prince. The unicorn was followed by a huge gilded lion, on whose back rode the female dwarf of the princess of Burgundy, superbly dressed as a shepherdess, with the arms of Burgundy. On his entrance into the hall, the lion opened and shut his mouth, as though he had been alive. This representative of brute majesty, did more

than the living original could have done; he sung a complimentary air to the ducal bride. The lion was succeeded by a dromedary, with a rider in the dress and armour of a Saracen. As he rode round the hall, the Saracen took out of his basket all sorts of foreign birds, which he distributed about him, and even threw upon the table.*

At supper, on the third day of these nuptial festivities appeared five *entremêts*. Four wild boars blew trumpets; and four goats executed a concert on various instruments. Four wolves exhibited a specimen of their skill on the flute, and four asses sung a rondeau, which may be found in Olivier de la Marche. Lastly, four monkies played a mischievous trick to a tradesman who was asleep, and then shewed their agility in dancing.†

All these *entremêts*, however, were eclipsed by those at the entertainment of the first day, on which the Bastard of Burgundy opened his tournament as knight of the golden tree. On this occasion two prodigious giants first entered

* *Olivier de la Marche*, II. p. 163, 167.

† *Ibid.* p. 169.

superbly habited, armed and accoutred. They were followed by a whale, which as Olivier de la Marche assures us, was the largest ever exhibited by way of *entremêts*. This sea-monster was sixty feet in length, and so high, that two knights riding one on either side upon the tallest horses could not have seen each other. The eyes of the whale were formed by two of the largest looking-glasses that could be procured. He moved his fins, his tail, and the rest of his body, as if he had been alive. After he had made the circuit of the hall, the whale opened his enormous jaws and disgorged two Syrens and twelve Tritons. The Syrens began to sing, but were soon interrupted by the sound of a drum, which was heard in the whale's belly. When it had ceased, the Tritons struck up a dance with the Syrens. The Tritons soon became jealous of each other, and commenced an obstinate combat, which was terminated by the two giants, who drove back the Tritons and Syrens into the belly of the whale. "It was certainly a most beautiful *entremêts*," says the historian, "for there were more than forty persons concealed in the body of the marine monster."*

* "Et certes ce fut un moult bel entremêts, car il y avoit dedans plus de quarante personnes." p. 201.

When no *entremêts* were given, the only amusements at table were conversation, and the playing and singing of minstrels; but the performances of the latter were often postponed till after the repast.* In smaller mixed companies, the ladies and gentlemen sometimes sung and danced after dinner.† After the music, confectionary and wine were brought to table, on which the ladies were accustomed to retire.‡

The gentlemen and ladies experienced no great loss when, in the fifteenth century the *entremêts* fell into disuse, for the pleasure which they afforded was abundantly compensated in a variety of ways. Instead of being indulged only a few days in the year with the honour of dining at court, they daily enjoyed this gratification

* *Froissart*, III. ch. 76. p. 217.

† A countess of Nevers paid a visit to Philip Duke of Burgundy at Lisle. On her departure, the duke sent Count Adolph of Cleves, and five other knights to escort her. About a mile from the city the gallant Adolph of Cleves was met by the Count de Charolois, with a retinue of knights who blocked up the road. A sham tournament ensued, after which the ladies were conducted to a neighbouring house, where the Count de Charolois had caused a splendid dinner to be provided. "Et après menger chanterent et danserent, et après les Dames remonterent à cheval." *Mém. de du Clercq.* p. 24.

‡ *Froissart*, III. p. 183.

from the time of Louis XII. and Francis I. When Henry II. who in this point most probably followed the example of his father, had dined, he suffered neither sweetmeats nor wine to be brought, but conducted his courtiers to the queen's apartment, where, as Brantome says, they found a company of human goddesses, the one more beautiful than the other, and each nobleman or gentleman could converse with her to whom he was most attached*. These assemblies usually lasted two hours, and were repeated after supper, when there was no dancing†. The queen very often heightened the pleasure of these meetings by concerts, for which purpose she engaged the most eminent performers.‡

The ladies and gentlemen of the court of Francis I. acquired at least as great a relish for the pleasures of dancing, as for those of the table and conversation. Francis was so fond of the amusement that he would not suffer even widows to excuse

* "Aussi tost qu'il avoit disné, il s'en alloit avec sa cour dans la chambre de la Reyne sa femme, qu'il aimoit fort, et là trouvant une troupe de deesses humaines les unes plus belles que les autres chaque seigneur gentilhomme entretenoit celle qu'il aymoit le mieux. *Brantome Hommes illust.* II. p. 48.

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Dames illust.* p. 87. 88.

themselves from participating in it.* Under Henry II. dancing after supper, though frequent enough, was not so common as during the reigns of his sons, who were encouraged by their mother to indulge in this diversion.† Catharine de Medicis was herself a great mistress in the art, for she invented new dances and beautiful ballets,‡ and in her fondness and talent for dancing she was emulated, if not by all her children, at least by Henry III. and Margaret of Navarre.§ Under Henry IV. the young gentlemen and ladies were par-

* "Le Roy François vouloit sa cour libre en tout, et mesme que les vefves y dansoient et les prenoit-on aussi librement, que l'on faisoit les filles, et les femmes mariées. Aujourdhuy cela leur est deffendu comme sacrilege. *Brantome Dames gal.* II. p. 114. Respecting the licentiousness of the dances at the commencement of the sixteenth century, see *Agrippa de Vanit. Scient.* ch. 18.

† "Les soirs après souper ce devis avec les Dames se faisoit de mesme, s'il n'y avoit bal, qui se faisoit assez souvent, mais non si frequemment comme nous avons veu depuis au regne de nos derniers roys, lesquels la reyne leur mère a voulu et entretenu à imiter leur père en telles actions, comme ce roy Henry s'estudia de mesme à imiter le roy François son père." *Brantome Hommes illust.* II. p. 49.

‡ *Dames illust.* p. 45, 48.

§ *Brantome Dames illust.* p. 258. 259. Margaret of Navarre danced to the universal astonishment of the court, and all the strangers who were present, *La Pavanne d'Espagne, le Pazzamento d'Italie, and le branle à la torche,* all of which were serious dances. After the great dinner given by Henry II. to the German princes and gentlemen in 1551, the *danse royale* was first danced, after which

ticularly attached to pantomimic dances.* Masquerades were equally common under all the French monarchs after Francis I. but under none were they conducted with less regard to decency than during the reign of Henry III. who once caused the lights to be suddenly extinguished, that every one might be at liberty to do what he pleased.† When no public dinners, no balls, masquerades, assemblies, or concerts were given at court, all these diversions were to be found in the palaces of the

succeeded *allemandes*, and then *gaillardes*. "Et après la dance royale, qui de deux à deux, que le roy avoit commencée et menée, on leur sonna des allemandes, parce que c'est leur danse ordinaire; et qu'ils entendent le mieux; et parmi elles de gaillardes, pour leur monstrer la disposition et bonnes graces de notre jeunesse Françoise. Après la quelle il ne s'y presenta pas ung seul de leur trouppe hors le prince d'Ornages, qui s'en acquitta fort dextrement, et eust emporté le prix de la gaillarde, si avec ses despostes, capriolles, tours et destours, fleurettes drues et menues gamberottes, bonds et saults fort ligiers et adroicts, il eust observé la cadence." *Carloix*, II. p. 225.

* Messrs de Biron et d'Auvergne danserent le Balet des Turcs, et trois jours ensuite Messrs de Montpensier, de Guise et le Grand danserent celuy des Amoureux, du quel j'estois. Messrs. le Comte d'Auvergne et quelques-uns de nous danserent à l'improviste celuy des Nymphes; finalement M. de Nemours dansa celuy des docteurs Gratiens. *Bassompierre*, I. p. 59. 60.

† The author of the *Galanteries des Rois de France*, II. p. 174. softens this down in the following terms: "Pendant l'obscurité la pudeur des Dames eut beaucoup à souffrir."

most distinguished persons of the court and capital.*

Among all the diversions of the court in the earlier ages, none so invariably maintained its consequence as the chace. On the decline of tournaments and chivalry, of the gallantry of the knights and the ancient etiquette of the court, the noble diversion of the chace not only continued to be held in its former estimation, but was even followed with greater ardour at the newly created courts and carried to a much a higher degree of perfection than it had been during the middle ages. Among all the French monarchs of the three last centuries, Henry III. was the only one that had not a passion for the pleasures of the chace. In the same period we find, on the contrary two instances of kings who fell early victims to their immoderate fondness for the sports of the field.† During the middle ages, hunting was regarded as an exercise fit only for knights,

* For instance, the festivities with which the constable de Montmorency celebrated the birth of his, afterwards, so unfortunate son. "Ballets, masquerades, musiques de toutes sortes, pantalomismes, et tout ce qui peut servir d'amorce à la volupté, suivirent ces beaux festins." *Etoile Journal de Henry IV.* II. p. 338.

† Charles IX. and Louis XIII.

and as a prototype of war, and for this reason females never, or at least very seldom, partook of the amusement. No sooner, however, had the ladies fixed their permanent residence at the court of kings and princes, than they were solicitous to accompany the sovereign, or were persuaded by the latter to join him, in his favourite diversion. Louis XII. took his young daughter Claude, and all the ladies who attended that princess, with him to the chace.* Francis I. had selected from among the ladies of his court a little band as priestesses of Diana, in whose company he often passed eight or ten days and even a longer time from court, in the undisturbed enjoyment of the pleasures of hunting.† The Dauphiness, afterwards Queen Catharine de Medicis, did not at first belong to the number of the select female associates of the great king. When she, however, desired permission to accompany him in his hunting-parties, Francis I. not only granted her request, but conceived a stronger attachment to her on account of

* *Lettres de Louis XII. et du Cardinal d'Amboise*, III. p. 37. On the hunting-establishment of Louis XII. see *Fleuranges*, p. 16.

† *Brantome Dames illust.* p. 46. 47.

it, and for her gratification took the diversion of the chace more frequently than he had been accustomed to do. Catharine was always by his side, and after his death constantly attended the hunting parties of her husband and her sons, till, to her great mortification, she was prevented by the infirmities of age. These examples were followed by Henry IV. Mary de Medicis, Louis XIII. Louis XIV. and the ladies of their courts, who were neither less fond of the diversion nor less indefatigable in the pursuit of it than their sovereigns.*

This participation in the chase had a powerful influence, not only upon the amusements of the ladies, but also upon their education and attainments. Though Francis I. and his successors did not neglect fowling, falconry, and coursing, yet they preferred the chace of the stag in company with a hundred or more huntsmen, far before all those branches of the more ancient field-sports; and in the middle of the sixteenth century, this kind

* *Mémoires Hist. sur la Chasse*, in *St. Palaye*, Vol. III. p. 349. See also *Hist. Amoureuse des Gaules*, III. p. 208.

of chace was a characteristic diversion of the French court, which was unknown in Germany.* It was therefore necessary that those ladies who accompanied the huntsmen, and shared with them all the fatigues and sports of the chace, should be equally expert in riding and shooting with the hunters of the other sex. In these points, Catharine de Medicis was the pattern and instructress of the ladies of the French court.† She rode as well as any of her male attendants, and was the first that used a man's saddle.‡ She was equally expert at shooting with a cross-bow, on which account she had always a weapon of that kind carried after her.§

The pleasures of the chace became

* "At this the Germans were highly delighted, for the game had entirely escaped them; but they were exceeding astonished to see a hundred, or a hundred and twenty huntsmen, sounding with their horns the death of the stag; for this mode of hunting is not practised in their country, where they only make use of the hand-gun, or cross-bow in the chace." *Carloix*, II. p. 227.

† *Brantome Dames illust.* p. 339. 341.

‡ "Elle estoit fort bien à cheval, et s'y tenoit de fort bonne grace, ayant esté la premiere, qui avoit mis la jambe sur l'arçon, d'autant que la grace y estoit bien plus belle, et apparoissante que sur la planchette. *Brantome Dames illust.* p. 47.

§ *Ibid.*

beyond comparison more expensive in consequence of stag-hunting, than they had been before, and the charges incurred by it were still farther increased by the attendance of the ladies. The kings and princes could no longer seek shelter in the cottage of a peasant, or the lodge of a gamekeeper; neither could they pass the night in the open air, in the midst of the forest, or under tents. Francis I. and his successors, therefore, erected many superb hunting-seats, where they could receive and entertain ladies and gentlemen in a manner suitable to their rank.* The apparel and implements for hunting, and the entertainments given on these occasions, were no longer on the same narrow scale as formerly, but displayed continually increasing magnificence, in order to the gratification of the ladies. All the other deities of pleasure associated themselves with the goddess of hunting, heretofore so coy and so chaste. The blood-stained forests and desert heaths, were

* "It was with this view that he built the superb palaces of Chambord, Villers-Coterets, la Meutte, near St. Germain, Falembray, in the Forest of Coucy, &c. and that he made great additions to the ancient mansion of our kings at Fontainbleau, to which they themselves had given no other appellation than that of their *desert*. *Mémoires sur la Chasse*, p. 47.

transformed into enchanting groves and retreats, where the priests and priestesses of Diana, offered frequent sacrifices on the altar of the Cyprian goddess.*

When neither hunting-parties nor balls occupied the attention of the court, the two royal knights, Francis I. and Henry II. amused themselves either with fencing, or with training fine horses, or with various kinds of games at ball;† and to all these pastimes they invited their consorts and the ladies of the court.‡ In the time of Henry II. they played at *maille*, for two, three, or at mos five hundred crowns a game: but under Henry IV. for four, six, and even twelve thousand crowns. In this game, the ladies sook a part, so early as the reign of Charles VIII. § and Catharine de Medicis, was as expert at it as she was inventive in social games. In winter, Henry II. took the

* See, for instance, the History of Louis XIV. and the beautiful Fontanges, in the *Hist. amoureuse des Gaules*, III. p. 191. 192.

† ---- "à la balle à emporter, ou ou ballon, ou au maille." *Hommes illust.* p. 46. 48.

‡ "Et faloit tousjours convier les Dames pour voir tous ses esbats."

§ At this game a violent quarrel took place between the regent Anne de Beaujeu and the Dauphin, afterwards Louis XII. *Dames illust.* p. 290. 291.

diversion of skating upon the ice with his attendants; or they constructed fortresses of snow, which were attacked and defended with balls made of the same substance*. In one of these engagements with snow-balls, Francis I. received so severe a wound on the head, that he was obliged to suffer it to be shaved. The courtiers imitated their sovereign, and hence it became the fashion to wear cropped hair. In England, in 1547, fights between large dogs, bears, and monkeys were among the diversions given in honour of foreign ambassadors.†

Most of the above diversions were, however, superseded, during the reigns of Henry III. Henry IV. and their successors, by two new species of amusements, one of which was almost entirely unknown, and the other, though known, was much less common than it became towards the conclusion of the sixteenth, and during the whole of the seventeenth century, —I mean, games of chance, and theatrical entertainments.

It is extremely probable, that games of chance were played at the court of Fran-

* *Hommes illust.* II. p. 46.

† *Carloix,* I. p. 248.

cis I. Henry II. and Henry III. It is certain, however, that they neither played so often nor so high as Henry IV. during whose reign all the journals and chronicles are filled with accounts and lamentations on the rage for gambling which so universally prevailed. The frank and economical Sully was as incapable of weaning that monarch from the pleasures of high play, as from his attachment to inconstant mistresses, and the reader, if he will take the trouble to turn to his Memoirs, may find a statement of the sums which he was obliged to pay for both those gratifications. Henry IV. played at all times, in all places, and it might almost be said with all persons whom he happened to meet with. The lowest fish staked was frequently fifty pistoles, and the highest sometimes five hundred; so that a person might hold in his hand at once, to the amount of more than fifty thousand pistoles.* As the king and his courtiers played almost every day, the ladies likewise took a part in those games, and the queen herself, after her delivery, could not think of a more agreeable amusement, than a game at hazard, to which she in-

* *Bassompierre*, I. p. 172, 173.

vited Marshal de Bassompierre, one of the most celebrated players of the age, during her lying-in.* In the space of a year, Bassompierre won half a million, and in the same period Marshal de Biron lost no less a sum.†

After the time of Henry IV. the rage for gaming became more violent and more general, and extended from the court among all classes of people in the capital, not excepting the very lowest. At court high play was a standing amusement, or rather a regular profession, by means of which, men of low extraction intruded themselves into the company of persons of the greatest distinction, even penetrated to the throne itself, and in a short time acquired immense wealth. On the other hand, persons of rank and fortune were often, in a few days, reduced to extreme indigence. No sooner could hundreds of thousands be won and lost at play, than

* ---- et pendant ces couches lorsqu'elle commença à se mieux porter, elle me faisoit entrer pour jouer avec elle." *Bassompierre*, I. p. 148.

† *Sully*, II. p. 92. *Journal de Henry* IV. Vol. III. p. 505, *an* 1609. "In this month were established many new academies for gaming, at which the citizens of all kinds risk considerable sums. The son of a merchant has been seen to lose at one sitting, sixty thousand crowns."

ladies and gentlemen of the highest distinction were not ashamed to open gambling-houses, and even to make use of base and dishonourable arts, the discovery of which was punished with disgrace. Many ladies, unable to pay the debts they had contracted at play, discharged them by the sacrifice of their honour; and in all these respects high play was one of the principal sources of the corruption of morals which became prevalent at courts.

In the year 1611, the Marquis d'Ancre, the favourite of the regent Mary de Medicis, lost in a day one hundred and twenty thousand pistoles.* Louis XIII. and Anne of Austria were not fond of play; and yet the spirit of gaming continued to extend with fatal rapidity. At the time of the Fronde, the oldest and most experienced members of the parliament lost their whole property at play in one night, without injury to their reputation.† Cardinal Mazarin staked three or four thousand pistoles every evening at play, and permitted his niece, the Countess de Soissons to risk still greater sums.

* *Etoile Journal de Henry IV.* Vol IV. p. 223.

† *De Retz*, II. p. 74.---- ce parlement, dont le plus sage, et le plus vieux en ce temps-là, jouoit gayement tout son bien en un soir, sans faire tort à sa reputation.

At the same time he accompanied the young queen's usual allowance of one thousand crowns a month for pin-money, with this exclamation: "Ah! if the queen did but know whence this money comes, and that it is the blood of the people, she would not be so lavish of it!"* About the same time Gourville and other adventurers acquired either solely or principally by gambling, the prodigious wealth which rendered them the confidants and agents of the princes and of the most distinguished persons about the court.† In the first years after Louis XIV. assumed the reins of government, women robbed their husbands, and children plundered their parents in order to gratify their propensity to the game of basset. The very servants would look over the shoulders of the players, and beg to be permitted to stake a year's wages upon a card.‡ As many families were ruined by another game of hazard, called Hoca, Louis XIV. forbade this game at Paris, on pain of

* *Motteville*, V. p. 139.

† *Mémoires de Gourville*, I. p. 253. Gourville was in other respects a man of excellent character.

‡ "On joue des sommes immenses à Versailles; le hoca est defendu à Paris sur peine de la vie, et on le joue chez le roi; cinq mille pistoles en un matin, ce n'est rien." *Lettres de Madame de Sevigné*, III. p. 266.

death, but permitted it to be played both morning and evening at Versailles. The queen having one morning lost twenty thousand crowns, and moreover neglected to go to mass, Louis could not forbear saying: "Let us reckon, Madam, how much this will make in a year."* He likewise deprived a nobleman of his honours, and exiled him from Paris, because he was convicted of having won five hundred thousand crowns by means of false cards.†

Theatrical representations were introduced among the diversions of the French court, at a much earlier period than games of chance; but it was not till long afterwards that they became daily or customary amusements.

Before the time of Henry II. the only kind of spectacles known in France were the farces, as they were denominated. These were acted either by the pupils in the convents, the students in the colleges, the clerks of the parliament of Paris, or by strolling players.‡

* *Lettres de Madame de Sevigné,* III. p. 347.

† *Ibid.* I. p. 117.

‡ *Brantome Dames Gal.* II. p. 352. *Hommes illust.* II. p. 21. Theatrical pieces were sometimes performed

The subjects of these farces were either borrowed from the sacred Scriptures and legends, or they were taken from the history of the day. In the latter case, living persons, or at least the actions and events of their lives, and also the follies of particular classes of the community were brought upon the stage. Louis XII. allowed the comedians to represent any character or any action they pleased, if they only forebore to meddle with the queen and her ladies.* These farces and the liberty of exhibiting the events of the day upon the stage were kept up at least till toward the end of the reign of Henry IV. Etoile mentions a remarkable instance of a farce, in which the king, and the taxes imposed by him were treated with no less severity than the parliament. At the representation of the farce, the king laughed even to tears; and the parliament having caused the players to be im-

by the ladies of the court; for instance, at the court of Queen Margaret of Navarre. An interesting account of the sacred dramas in the middle of the 16th century, is given in *La vie de St. Evremond par des Maizeaux*, p. 141.

* "Il pardonnoit aux comediens de son royaume comme escoliers, et clercs du palais en leur basaches, de quiconque ils parleroient fors de la reyne, sa femme et de ses dames et demoiselles." *Brantome Dames Gal.* II.

prisoned on account of their sallies against the ministers of justice, he immediately ordered them to be set at liberty.* Catharine de Medicis enjoyed these farces as much as Henry IV,† in whose time the comedians exhibited their performances in the Hotel de Bourgogne.‡

The first regular dramatic exhibition in France was given at Lyons, in the presence of Henry II. under the title of a tragi-comedy by Italian actors and actresses, whom the Cardinal de Ferrara had brought thither at a prodigious expence.§ Notwithstanding the gratification which this spectacle afforded, it did not suggest to the king the idea of erecting a theatre at his court, after the example of the uncle of his consort, Pope Leo X. This measure was first adopted by Henry III. who procured from Venice a company of comedians, called *Li Gelosi*, and caused them to act first at Blois and afterwards at Paris in the Hotel de Bourbon.‖ The Gelosi attracted a greater number of auditors than four of the most eminent

* *Journal de Henry IV.* Vol. III. p. 409.
† *Dames illust.* p. 48.
‡ *Etoile*, as above.
§ *Hommes illust.* II. p. 20.
‖ *Etoile Journal de Henry III.* Vol. I. 202. 212.

preachers, notwithstanding each person was obliged to pay four *sols* for admission. The Gelosi it would appear, performed no other pieces but comedies, and those of a very licentious description. So much, at least, is certain, that the parliament of Paris forbade their exhibitions, "because, they taught nothing but lewdness."* Notwithstanding this prohibition, Henry III. permitted the Gelosi to continue their performances at Paris. During the reign of the same monarch, St. Gelais composed the first tragedy entitled Sophonisba after an Italian piece which had been acted before Leo X.† Catharine de Medicis had St. Gelais' tragedy performed at Blois, by the gentlemen and ladies of her court: but in the sequel she bitterly reproached herself on this account, under the idea that she had thereby drawn down calamities upon France.‡ For this reason she could never afterwards endure tragedies; but took great delight in comedies, tragi-comedies and farces of every kind. The troubles that prevailed in the first

* *Etoile Journal de Henry III.* Vol. I. p. 209 --"pour ce qu'elles n'ensignaient que de paillardises."

† *Brantome Hommes illust.* II. p. 21. *Dames illust.* p. 48.

‡ *Dames illust.* as above.

years of Henry the Fourth's reign, again drove the foreign comedians from Paris. Henry, in 1608, brought from Italy a new company, whom he maintained entirely at his own cost, and therefore commanded their attendance at Fontaineblau, when he resided for some time at that place.* This last-mentioned company entertained the court, not only with comedies, but also with ballets, which had before been in general performed only by gentlemen and ladies of the court. Corneille, it is well known, became the founder of the French stage by means of his Cid, which he produced in the year 1635. The best of his other pieces were composed between the years 1644 and 1650. Mazarin caused the first operas to be performed by Italian singers of both sexes, in 1646, and the following year he repeated that entertainment.† Anne of Austria was very fond of theatrical exhibitions, and accordingly during her regency the stage became a constant amusement of the court, and either a French or an Italian piece was represented, daily, or at least every other day.‡

* *Sully*, III. p. 53, 54.
† *Motteville*, I. p. 353, 413, &c.
‡ *Ibid.* 409, 410.

The increasing splendour and prodigality, the assemblage and continual residence of the principal nobility of both sexes at the courts of kings and princes, the absence of great landed proprietors from their estates and their vassals; and the incessant round of dissipation and amusements, in which the gentlemen and ladies of the court were incessantly engaged, produced the most important changes, in the first instance in the relations and manners of both sexes, and also in language, in taste, in social life, and even in the transaction of public affairs. Before I enter upon a minute investigation of these changes, I shall make the reader acquainted with a great revolution which took place in the education of women of rank and distinction, at the very period when the sex began to constitute the principal ornament of courts.

CHAPTER III.

Of the Important Changes which took place, on the Revival of the Sciences, in the Education of the Female Sex.

Among no European nation, in which the arts and sciences have ever flourished, were they wholly monopolized by the stronger sex. Females have taken a larger or a smaller share in both; the greater number, in order to cultivate the qualities of the heart and understanding, and to fit themselves for the performance of the social duties; but many with a view to exalt themselves above the level of their sex, exposed, as they conceived to oppression and contempt, and to vie with the most industrious and the most celebrated men in the career of genius and reputation. Ancient Greece and Rome, and even the middle ages produced many learned women and female writers of celebrity. Notwithstanding the sex was confined in ancient Greece and modern Italy, nearly in the Oriental manner, yet both those countries afford instances of females who,

with masculine hand, broke the bolts and locks and their harems, and with manly boldness placed themselves in the professor's chair, for the purpose of instructing youth of the other sex in the most sublime and difficult sciences.* It cannot, therefore, appear surprizing, that the lively enthusiasm for the ancient languages and monuments, and for the restoration of all the arts and sciences, which was excited in the fourteenth and continued during the fifteenth and sixteenth century, should have been caught by certain happily organized persons of the fair sex; that females should have applied themselves to the study of the Greek and Latin, and even of the Oriental languages, and should have acquired, or at least endeavoured to acquire, glory by the fruits of their industry and genius; that, finally, several women should have distinguished themselves as public orators, or as teachers of the languages and sciences. On the contrary, it may be regarded as a peculiar characteristic of the fifteenth, and still more of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century, that the

* *Thomas, sur les femmes*, p. 62. mentions several instances of this kind.

enthusiasm for the sciences and the learned languages among females of the higher ranks was strongest and most general: that at the very time when the majority of princes and nobles despised men of learning as clerks, and regarded the sciences as degrading to their dignity, women of the highest distinction patronized literature and the arts with the most lively interest: that queens and princesses so far from being ashamed, thought it an honour to be poetesses and writers: and that those females who had received no instruction in the learned languages and the scholastic sciences, at least made themselves mistresses of the best works of modern nations, studied with the utmost assiduity to speak and write their mother-tongue with elegance and precision, and to form correct opinions on the productions of wit and taste, as well as on men and things.

The delicious country in which the classic languages of Greece and Rome were first revived, and the monuments of Greek and Roman antiquity were first recovered, that region, I say, was the portion of the European continent, in which ladies of distinction first aspired to the newly discovered treasures of ancient wis-

dom. The examples of the Italian females soon excited the emulation of their fair and enlightened sisters in France, England, Spain and Germany. To the honour of the French ladies it must be acknowledged, that in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth century, they distinguished themselves above all the others by their accomplishments in general, and their literary talents in particular, and that in consequence they justly became the patterns of their sex throughout all Europe.

As early as the first half of the fifteenth century not only the sons, but also the daughters of princes were instructed in the Greek and Latin languages. In the years 1433 and 1435, Ambrosius Traversarius, the celebrated general of the order of Camaldulenses found in the school established by Victorinus at Mantua, among other noble and hopeful pupils, a prince and princess de Gonzaga, who as far surpassed all their companions in diligence, knowledge and talents, as in their elevated rank. The princess, who was ten years of age, wrote Greek so fairly as to put Ambrosius to the blush, because among all the scholars whom he had instructed in writing, scarcely any could be compared

with this young lady.* In the latter half of the same century, the number of learned females increased in the same proportion as ancient literature became more generally diffused. Politian praises, in particular, an Alexandra Scala and a Cassandra, on account of the beautiful Greek and Latin poems, by which they excited the envy or admiration of the cotemporary poets and lovers of poesy. Toward the conclusion of the fifteenth, and at the commencement of the sixteenth century, not only the acquisition of the Latin language, but likewise a knowledge of various useful sciences seems to have been considered a necessary accomplishment of young princesses. Renata, the youngest daughter of Louis XII. of France, was such a proficient in all the sciences, and even in astronomy, that the greatest philosophers could not treat more ably of subjects connected with them than she.† She became the wife of the Duke of Ferrara,

* *Meiners Lebensbeschr. berühmter Männer,* II. p. 292.

† "Elle avoit fort estudié et l'ay veu fort sçavante discourir fort hautement et gravement de toutessciences jusques à l'astrologie et la connoissance des astres, que le plus grand philosophe du monde n'en sçauroit mieux parler." *Brantome Dames illust.* p. 300. 302.

and brought her husband three beautiful daughters, whom she had so carefully instructed in every branch of liberal and useful knowledge, that it was said of these princesses, that their minds were not less fair and accomplished than their persons.* About the same time, Louisa of Savoy, the mother of Francis I. Catharine, consort of Henry VIII.† of England, and the two illustrious regents of the Netherlands, Margaret of Austria, and Mary of Hungary, attained to such a proficiency in Latin, that they could not only read the works dedicated to them by the most celebrated writers, and the letters which were sent to them, without interpreters, but that the latter could even return answers in the same language.‡ The ami-

* *Brantome Dames illust,* p. 300. 302.

† *Erasmi Epist. Tom.* I. p. 1062.

‡ Latin letters to all these three princesses are to be found among the letters of Agrippa. That writer dedicated to the princess Margaret of Austria his Discourse on the nobility and excellency of the Female Sex; and Erasmus inscribed his *Vidua Christiana,* to Queen Mary, from whom he had received a letter written with her own hand. *Epistolium tua manu scriptum,* says he, *tanquam animi tui charissimum pignus inter ea reponetur, quæ mihi maxime sunt cordi.* See *Erasmi Epist.* Vol. II. p. 1298. He praises the partiality of the same princess to Latin writers---*Cæsaris Germana Maria Latinos codices habet in deliciis. Epist.* MXXXII. p. 1171. A *Journal de Louise de Savoye,* composed by the mother of Francis I.

able mother of Francis I. gave not only her son, but likewise her daughter, afterwards queen of Navarre, a learned education. The latter made a much greater progress in her studies than the former, though Francis belonged to the number of the learned princes of the sixteenth century. With extraordinary beauty, and the fairest female virtues, Margaret of Navarre united a highly cultivated understanding, and an energy of mind that is not often found, even in the greatest of men.* All the learned extolled her without flattery, as one of the greatest ornaments of her sex, and as a powerful patroness of the sciences, and as many authors dedicated their works to this princess, as to her generous brother king Francis I.† That monarch's affection for his sister was surpassed only by his respect; and he very often submitted the most important mat-

is still extant, and I am therefore surprised that she is not mentioned in the *Histoire litteraire des Femmes Françoises. Paris*, 1769, 5 vols. 8vo.

* See *Brantome Dames illust.* p. 307, &c. and *Erasmi Epist.* DCCLXIV. Vol. I. p. 890, 891. "I have long admired, and loved the many excellent qualities with which God has endowed you; prudence worthy of a philosopher, chastity, temperance, piety, unshaken fortitude, and a wonderful contempt of all transitory things."

† *Brantome*, p. 308.

ters to her decision.* Margaret of Navarre rendered the greatest services to her brother during his captivity in Spain. She assisted her mother in the preservation and government of the kingdom, and on receiving intelligence of the mortal despondency which had taken possession of the mind of the captive monarch, she went herself to Spain, and by her presence, and emphatic consolation, she infused new spirits into the melancholy soul of the king; an obligation which he afterwards often publicly acknowledged.† To the emperor, who, by his unworthy treatment had brought his illustrious prisoner to the brink of the grave, she represented the cruelty, and even the impolicy of his conduct with such effect, that he adopted other measures, and behaved to the king of France with greater courtesy and respect.‡ With equal energy she addressed the grand council of Spain or the empe-

* *Brantome*, p. 309. "Il l'appelloit tousjours sa mignonne.---Bien souvent lors qu'il avoit des grandes affaires, les remettoit à elle en attendant sa definition et totale resolution." p. 312.

† *Ibid.* p. 313, and 316. "Le roy le disoit souvent que sans elle il estoit mort, dont il lui avoit cette obligation qu'il reconnoistroit à jamais et l'en aymeroit comme il a fait jusqu'à sa mort," &c.

‡ *Ibid.* 314, 315.

ror's privy-council, who were filled with no less admiration of her eloquence than all the ambassadors who came to her brother's court, and to whom she generally gave audience.*

The important part which Francis I. and his mother suffered the queen of Navarre to take in the government of the kingdom, did not in the least distract her attention from the sciences, and from literary avocations. No one was more happy than she in the invention of mottoes, or devices, as they were called, and which were embroidered or wrought in tapestry, bed-furniture, &c. Of these she composed an incredible number in Latin, French, and other languages.† She likewise wrote many plays, which were then denominated pastorals, and caused them to be performed by the young ladies of her court.‡ Her numerous poems were collected and published by her courtiers under the title of *Marguerite des Marguerites.*§ But she acquired her greatest re-

* "Or si cette reyne parla bien à l'Empereur, elle dit encore pis à ceux de son conseil, où elle eut audience, là où elle triompha de bien dire, et bien haranguer, et avec une bonne grace dont elle n'estoit point depourvue." &c. *Brantome*, 312. 315.

† *Ibid* p. 321.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 308.

§ *Ibid.* and *Œuvres de Pasquier*, II. p. 664, 665.

putation as a writer by her *Decameron*, or *les cent Nouvelles de la Reine de Navarre*, which during her life-time were more highly esteemed than the Tales of Bocaccio, and which are still preferred to the model which she imitated.* Most of these novels were written while travelling in her litter, and with the same facility as though they had been dictated by another.†

One of the most prominent virtues of the queen of Navarre, was her undissembled piety. She carried her religion not upon her lips, but in her heart, and seriously reflected on its solemn truths. It is not improbable, that among all those truths none was concealed from the pious and contemplative queen, with such an impenetrable veil, as the important doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and the eternal duration of the rewards of virtue after death. On this subject Brantome relates some anecdotes, which are extremely interesting in various points of view. The queen being once informed

* *Pasquier*, as above.---" livre fait à l'imitation du Decameron de Bocace, et non moins plaisant, mais beaucoup plus sage--- compositions honorées par la plus grande partie des beaux esprits de nostre temps."

† *Brantome*, p. 321.

that one of the ladies of her bedchamber, to whom she was greatly attached, was at the point of death, she seated herself by the bed-side of the expiring female, and never took her eyes from her till she had breathed her last. Her attendants could not forbear asking their mistress why she had fixed her eyes so immoveably on an object so disagreeable as a dying person. The queen replied, that " she had done it to ascertain the truth of an opinion maintained by certain philosophers, that at the moment of death the soul is separated from the body. She had therefore watched to discover whether the spirit of a dying person quitted its habitation in a manner perceptible to the organs of sight or hearing. She had not, however, perceived any thing of the kind,* and she should therefore be at a loss what to think of the presumed separation of the soul and body, if she were not firmly established in the faith, and did not know that it was her duty to embrace the truths of religion, even though she could not ex-

* " Ayant tant ouy discourir à tant de sçavans docteurs, que l'ame et l'esprit sortoit du corps aussi-tost qu'il trespassoit; elle voulut voir, s'il s'en sortiroit quelque vent où bruit où le moindre raisonnement du monde, au deloger et sortir, mais qu'elle n'y avoit rien apperçu," &c. *Brantome*, p. 319.

plore and satisfactorily account for them." —Whenever the queen of Navarre heard any one speaking of death, and the happiness of a future state, she would reply: "All that is very true, but how long must we slumber in the bosom of the earth till we attain the enjoyment of that bliss!"* The dread of this long slumber rendered the intelligence of her own approaching end a very unwelcome piece of information. The wise and pious queen believed that she was not too old to live a few years longer with pleasure and advantage.

The sister of Francis I. was not, as it was then customary, by a very natural play upon words to say, the only pearl *(marguerite)* of the French crown, that increased the lustre of her birth by the splendour of her genius. Two other princesses of the same name gained, during the same century, as many admirers by their attainments, as by their beauty and high birth. The first of these French princesses was the daughter of Francis I. who after her father's death was married to Emanuel, duke of Savoy.† As the sister of Francis I. was styled the mother

* *Brantome*, p. 317.

† *Ibid.* p. 323. *Pasquier*, II. p. 665, 668.

of French poetry, so the daughter was denominated the mother of French poets, who all praised their patroness in their compositions as the Minerva of France.* She regularly devoted her afternoons to study, or to conversation with men of learning. After her marriage, she was as zealous a patroness of the French nobility and warriors, who had lost their health or their fortunes in Italy, as she had been when single, of poets and men of learning.†

Before I proceed to the third Margaret of France, I must necessarily take some notice of her mother Catharine de Medicis, and her mother-in-law, queen Joanna of Navarre. Those two princesses had not, as far as we know, received a learned education; but they had cultivated their minds by the perusal of the best Italian, French, and Spanish authors, and by associating with men of learning, to such a degree, that, by their eloquence, and their knowledge of men and things, they irresistibly subdued all hearts, and surmount-

* The duchess of Savoy had for her device an olive branch entwined with serpents, around which were these words: "*Rerum sapientia custos.*"

† *Pasquier.*

ed every obstacle that opposed their undertakings.* Queen Joanna received the surname of *Golden Mouth*, which appellation Catharine de Medicis equally deserved.

Of all the princesses whom I have yet mentioned, none can be compared for beauty, learning, and talents, with the queen of Navarre, the first wife of Henry IV. and the unfortunate Mary, queen of Scots, the consort of Francis II. It is the more to be lamented, that these two queens, on whom nature, art, and fortune had been so profuse of their favours, should have deformed even many exalted virtues by the licentiousness of their lives.

As the elder Margaret of Navarre, and Margaret of France, duchess of Savoy, left their two brothers, Francis I. and Henry II. at a great distance behind them, in regard to the cultivation of their minds; so the daughter of queen Catharine de Medicis surpassed, but in a still greater degree, her three brothers, Francis II. Charles IX. and Henry III. The younger Margaret of Navarre was such a proficient in the Latin tongue, that when a

* *Brantome*, p. 85, 86, 225.

Polish ambassador honoured her with a speech in that language, she answered him immediately with such fluency and pertinence, that all present unanimously declared her a second Minerva or Suada.*— She excited still greater admiration when she was accosted at Bordeaux, by three orators successively, and returned an answer to each, with such majesty and grace, that even learned connoisseurs were obliged to confess, that they had never heard any one speak so well in all their lives.† She had continually at her table several men of letters, to whom she commonly proposed some important question for their joint discussion. The queen gave her opinion, and suffered her sentiments to be commented upon with the same freedom as those of any other person in the company.‡ Margaret must have had many very great and exalted qualities in her character, since the severest moralists of her own and of subsequent times have coincided in their opinion, that, notwithstanding all her fail-

* *Brantome*, p. 223.

† *Ibid.* p. 225. "Le dit sieur president, qui s'entendoit en telles mercerics me vint dire, qu'il n'avoit jamais ouy mieux dire en sa vie quiconque fust."

‡ *Pasquier*, II. p. 666.

ings, she was one of the most accomplished princesses that ever existed.* Her *Memoirs* are better written than any other work of the same kind composed during the reign of Henry IV. that is still extant.

Among the princesses of the sixteenth century, none bore such a resemblance in talents and foibles to the consort of Henry IV. as Mary, queen of Scots. Brantome reckons this queen, and not without plausible reasons, among the French princesses, because her mother was of the house of Lorraine, and because she herself was educated from her earliest infancy at the court of France, and became the wife of Francis II. The mother of the fair and hopeful Mary seconded the happy disposition of her daughter with such success, that, at the age of fourteen, she held a Latin oration, in the presence of the king, the queen, and the whole court, in which she undertook to prove that the study of the arts and sciences was not unbecoming in women.† Mary never renounced the sciences, either amid

* *Pasquier*, as above. *Sully*, I. p. 528.---II. p. 346, 347, 541. *Mezeray Histoire de la mère et du fils*, I. p. 325---7.

† *Brantome, Dames illust.* p. 114.

the dissipations and employments of the court, which corrupted her heart, or the miseries of an ignominious imprisonment, by which it was again refined and amended. The beautiful Mary was classed among the first-rate poets of France, and to judge from the affecting elegy which Brantome has inserted in her life, she was certainly not surpassed by any of her contemporaries.*

The last learned princesses of the sixteenth century, belonging to the royal family of France, that I can mention, were Catharine, sister of Henry IV. and Mary de Medicis, the second wife of that monarch. The former frequently cited passages of Latin authors, and the latter often repeated verses from the Latin translation of the Psalms.†

Besides the princesses, many other French females of rank or distinction, obtained celebrity by their writings or their erudition. Anne and Philippine Duprat, three sisters of the name of Morel, and the duchess de Retz, were most distinguished for their extensive knowledge of

* *Brantome Dames illust.* p. 121.

† *Sully*, I. p. 583. *Journal du Cardinal Richelieu*, I. p. 20.

the ancient and modern languages. * The duchess de Retz answered the Polish ambassador in at least as good Latin as that in which he had addressed her.

The spirit of the times which led females of rank and distinction to the study of the ancient languages and all the branches of the sciences, likewise instigated Henry III. after the example of the Medici, to found an academy at his court. Of all the institutions of modern times, known by the name of academies, none was so unprofitable or so short-lived as this; and yet the derided academy of Henry III. was frequented by the ladies of his court.†

Next to the French ladies, those of England applied themselves with the greatest zeal to the study of the ancient languages and of the sciences. The latter, however, possessed an undeniable superiority over their continental neighbours in one important particular, that is to say, they conferred much greater honour on their erudition by irreproachable manners

* *Hist. litteraire des femmes Franç.* I. p. 119, 121. Mademoiselle de Gournay, the ablest defender of Montagne, ought not to be omitted in enumerating the learned ladies of the sixteenth century. Her *Preface sur les Essais de Montaigne* is truly a master-piece. See the *Preface du Journal de Voy. de Montagne*, p. XXXII.

† *Brantome Dames gal.* II. p. 181.

than the females of France. Queen Catharine Parr, the last wife of Henry VIII. was herself the translator of a literary work.* She was excelled by the queens Mary and Elizabeth, both of whom were likewise authors.† The former wrote Latin epistles with elegance,‡ and the latter was in the habit of returning extemporary answers in the same language to Polish ambassadors. The beautiful, virtuous, heroic, and unfortunate Lady Jane Gray, who was in every respect worthy of the first throne in the world, is justly styled by Hume a prodigy of literature. Never was a female, and very seldom a person of the other sex, attached to the sciences so purely for their own sakes, or on account of the pleasure and advantage which they afforded to her understanding and her heart, as Lady Jane Gray, who ascended the scaffold with greater resolution than the throne, and who consoled her sister in the same language in which Plato wrote

* *Hume.*

† *Ibid.*

‡ *Erasm. Epist.* MXXXII. p. 1171. "We have a queen of England, who is a very learned woman, and whose daughter Mary *scribit bene epistolas Latinas.* "Things are strangely altered," adds Erasmus; "monks know nothing of letters, and women delight in books."

on the immortality of the soul.* Not only the queens, but as Hume informs us, "even the ladies of the court valued themselves on their knowledge. Lady Burleigh, Lady Bacon, and their two sisters, were mistresses of the ancient as well as modern languages; and placed more pride in their erudition, than in their rank and quality." The house of Sir Thomas More, the lord-chancellor, was truly the habitation of the Muses.† His three daughters, but especially Margaret, who was afterwards married to a gentleman of the name of Roper, wrote even in her childhood, Latin letters, of which veterans in literature would have had no occasion to be ashamed. ‡ It was perhaps these three daughters of Sir Thomas, or the three Seymours, who honoured the memory of the elder queen Margaret of Navarre, in Latin poems of their own composition.§

§ *Hume.*

† *Erasm. Epist.* MXXXII. "Thomæ Mori domus nihil aliud quam Musarum est domicilium."

‡ *Erasmi Epist.* DCV. p. 679. MLXXV. p. 1232. *Append. Epist.* CCCLII. p. 1743. CCCLXXVI. VIII, p. 1766.

§ *Pasquier,* II. "Three young English ladies, sisters, honoured her memory with several Latin distichs,

In the sixteenth century, no country of Europe contained so many teachers, professors, and patrons of literature and real science in general, as Germany; accordingly a portion of the universal enthusiasm for the ancient languages, and for the restoration of religion and letters, could not fail to be communicated to the wives and daughters of the friends of the sciences. It is nevertheless a matter of surprize, that in those times of the greatest fermentation and enthusiasm, a greater number of German females did not obtain celebrity by their erudition and their writings. Excepting the princesses of the house of Austria, of whom mention has been made at the beginning of this chapter, we can name but very few German ladies who distinguished themselves during the sixteenth century, by their literary attainments, or their patronage of the learned. Charitas, a sister and a scholar of the celebrated Bilibald Pirkheimer, an abbess of the convent of St. Clara, at Nürnberg, read Greek works and wrote Latin letters, a small collection of which is preserved in the

which were variously translated into French *quatrains* by Ronsard, du Bellay, and Baif, according to the different fancy of each."

works of her brother.* Ulrich von Hütten praises the fair Constantia, a daughter of the learned Peutinger of Augsburg, who entwined the laurel wreath with which the Franconian knight was crowned for his poetic talents by the emperor Maximilian.†

Spain remained very far behind all the other civilized countries of Europe, in regard to the number and zeal of the friends of the sciences. That kingdom, nevertheless, produced more females than Germany, who were acquainted not only with the Greek and Latin, but also with the Hebrew and other Oriental languages, or stepped forward as public orators, to fill the pope and the cardinals with astonishment, or to convert the obstinate Jews.‡

In the first half of the seventeenth century, the partiality of the sex to ancient literature and the study of the sciences, properly so called, was considerably diminished. At the same time, however,

* *Oper. Perkheimeri*, p. 340, &c.

† *Meiners Lebensbeschreibungen*, III. p. 113.

§ See *Thomas sur les Femmes*, p. 64, 65. The names of these Spanish ladies were: Isabella de Roseres, Isabella de Cordova, Catharine de Ribera, and Aloysia Sigea de Toledo.

the desire of acquiring a knowledge of the modern languages and their best works, and the ambition of speaking and writing the mother-tongue with elegance and precision, gradually became more general, especially in France. Anne of Austria was neither learned nor accomplished. On the other hand, the princesses of Conti,* of Orleans,† of Bourbon,‡ and the princess Palatine, whose extraordinary genius found a worthy panegyrist in the cardinal de Retz; the duchesses de Longueville, and de Nemours;§ Madame de Motteville,‖ and de Sevigné;¶ the marquise de Rambouillet and her daughter, afterwards marquise de Montausier,** finally, the

* *Hist. litter. des femmes Franç.* I. p. 125. She was the author of the *Amours de Henri* IV.

† Mademoiselle de Montpensier, author of six volumes of *Mémoires*, and other works.

‡ Among Voiture's Letters, there are several to this princess of Bourbon, who belonged to the Society of Literature and Gallantry, at the *Hotel de Rambouillet:*

§ The latter left behind her a work entitled *Mémoires:* see *Hist. litter. des femmes illust.* I. p. 353. The former wrote an eloquent manifesto against the king, (*Mém. de Motteville,* III. p. 429.) and was, during the period of her piety, the greatest patroness of the fraternity of Port Royal, and of the Jansenists. *Siecle de Louis XIV.* II. p. 278.

‖ Her five volumes of *Mémoires* are highly interesting and instructive.

¶ *Hist litt.* I. p. 364.

** See the *Lettres de Voiture.*

poetess de la Sauze*, and Mesdemoiselles Scuderi,† Bourignon,‡ and de l'Enclos,§ possessed both learning and accomplishments. In erudition, however, all these ladies were surpassed by the noble Cornara,‖ the celebrated Schurmann¶ of Cologne, and Christina, queen of Sweden.**

* *Hist. lit. des femmes Franç.* I. p. 344.

† *Ibid.* I. p. 142.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 312.

§ *Ibid.* and also the *Vie de Madem. de l'Enclos,* prefixed to the *Lettres,* written quite in her spirit.

‖ *Keysslers Reisen,* p. 1047.

¶ See the sentiments of the learned Naudé, concerning Schurmann, in the *Lettres choisies de Balzac,* p. 212. "Whatever hands can execute, or imagination conceive, she is capable of. She paints in such a manner that no one surpasses her, and carves and models in brass, wax, and wood, with equal excellence. In the art of dress, and in all the female duties and avocations, she challenges and bears away the palm from all other women, both of ancient and modern times. She is conversant with so many different branches of science, that you cannot tell in which she excels. She is endowed with so many gifts of languages, that not content with the European, she has penetrated by study and industry into the East itself, and there acquired the Hebrew, the Arabic, and the Syriac, to add them to those of which she was already mistress. She writes Latin with such elegance as not to be surpassed in that accomplishment by any man who has made it his study during his whole life. The French letters she composes are such as almost to rival those of Balzac himself. The other common European languages she speaks as fluently as the natives of the respective countries in which they are used. With the Jew she can correspond in Hebrew, and with the Saracen in Arabic."

** Interesting particulars and opinions concerning this

Though Mademoiselle de Scuderi could not be compared for variety of attainments with the learned Schurmann, yet she operated much more powerfully on the taste of the age, than the latter. The romances of Scuderi were at least for a whole generation the favourite works, not only of women, but also of every person of the other sex, who was desirous of pleasing the ladies, or wished rather for amusement than for dry instruction. Less extensive was the effect, but more durable the fame of the mixed circles or societies which the marquise de Rambouillet, and the duchess de Longueville, assembled at their hotels, where the greatest geniuses of both sexes amused themselves with lively sallies, or submitted to each other their works and ideas, or criticized the latest productions of taste and wit, or, finally, conversed on the subject of interesting persons and circumstances.* After

eccentric queen, may be found in the *Mémoires de Madame de Motteville*, I. p. 389. IV. p. 444.

* These established societies were at first denominated in earnest, and afterwards by way of ridicule *Bureaux d'esprit*. The oldest of them was that in the Hotel de Rambouillet, which, as may be seen in the Letters of Balzac and Voiture existed as early as the first years of the third decennium, and continued till the latter half of the seventeenth century. In 1650, the editor of Voiture's letters says, in the preface: "He was extremely beloved in that most

the examples of the marquise de Rambouillet and the duchess de Longueville, Ninon de l'Enclos likewise made her house a rendezvous of the most select persons of the court and city. This, however, did not happen till Ninon was visited, rather for the sake of her intellectual accomplishments than for her personal charms, that is, not till the latter half of the seventeenth century, which lies beyond the limits of the present enquiry.*

celebrated house, in which virtue is now-a-days acknowledged and honoured, I mean the hotel de Rambouillet." Thomas speaks of the *conversations de l'hotel de Rambouillet* and of the *société de Madame de Longueville* in a way which proves that he was but imperfectly acquainted with the principal persons (p. 130, 139). He likewise does injustice to the daughter of the marquise de Rambouillet, afterwards marquise de Montausier (p. 139, 140.) when he asserts that the letters, for which she was so highly commended by all the *beaux esprits* were not written by her, but by Voiture. The letters of Voiture himself afford the most irrefragable refutation of this charge. In *Lettre* LXIII. p. 268, Voiture praises the compositions of this young lady in the following terms: "They are far superior to those for which I formerly admired you so much, and which I thought the finest I had ever seen; and though I am not of a jealous disposition, yet I should be exceedingly vexed if there was a man in France who could write as well as you." In *Lettre* CLXVII. p. 603, 604, he says: "Pray tell me from what abyss you have drawn this deluge of letters, which you have sent hither, all of which are so admirable, so elegant, so finished, that the composition of each would require all the time that you have been absent."

* *Vie de Madem. de l'Enclos*, p. 31. "The house of the celebrated Ninon," says a modern writer, "the Abbé Gedouin, "was the rendezvous of all the persons of the

The erudition, or at least the intellectual attainments by which the other sex began to be distinguished in the fifteenth and two succeeding centuries, were attended with many good and bad consequences, which in a general view of the subject cannot be detailed, and still less correctly appreciated. In their zeal for literary pursuits, many females certainly renounced the sphere for which nature had designed them, without attaining the end which they had proposed to themselves—the reputation of extensive learning and celebrity as authors. Others abused their acquirements for the purpose of more boldly bidding defiance to religion, virtue, and decorum; refining and multiplying the enjoyments of sensual appetites; and making others the instruments of their guilty passions and projects. Though all these effects must be principally ascribed to the augmented and often

court and city, who were most highly esteemed for their understanding. The most virtuous mothers solicited for their sons, on their entrance into life, the advantage of being admitted into an amiable society, which was regarded as the centre of good company." And again, p. 33. ---" Her house was even during the latter part of her life, perhaps, the only one in which people might venture to make use of their talents and understanding, and in which they could spend whole days without gaming and without *ennui*."

pernicious influence of women on the affairs of courts and states; yet on the other hand, we should not forget that this influence was not intrinsically pernicious, or if it were, that it was not rendered so by the talents and attainments of the sex. We ought to consider that by means of the ornamental and useful knowledge they had acquired, many learned and accomplished women became better wives, more enlightened instructors of their children, more agreeable companions, more intelligent friends and advisers of their husbands, and more competent to the performance of their public and private duties. But of all the advantages that have been derived in modern times, from the propensity of the sex to the pursuits of literature and of science, none are so incontestable as the following; that, at a period when men of the higher ranks either hated, despised, or thought ill of the sciences and those by whom they were cultivated, females of rank and distinction took both under their protection; that they particularly encouraged the improvement of the modern languages and poetry; and finally, that they first created the *bon ton* of good company, which cannot subsist without accomplished women,

and thereby conferred the greatest benefits on the other sex.

The extraordinary numbers of celebrated women, who attracted the notice of their contemporaries, either by their attainments, their writings or their actions, produced a host of historians and poets, who extolled the virtues and excellencies of these remarkable females, and also a long series of apologists and panegyrists, who attempted to prove that the other sex is equal, or even superior to ours.*—The first of these was Agrippa, of Nettesheim, who, in 1509, sought to gain the favour of the regent, Margaret of Austria, by a declamation, in which he gave the fair sex a very great pre-eminence above the other.† Agrippa praised many qualities which the sex does not possess, or which are not in themselves commendable, and on the other hand omitted to mention many excellent endowments, which would have afforded a just theme for panegyric. The

* *Thomas*, p. 69, 82, enumerates most of the historians and panegyrists of the fair sex of the 14th and of the three following centuries. The greater part of their works, which are, almost without exception, weak and silly productions, I have not been able to procure, and have reason to believe that many of them are not now extant.

† *Declamatio de nobilitate et præcellentia fœminei sexus*, in his *Oper.* T. II. p. 578, &c.

most extraordinary circumstance, however, is that he, who, in his own times, and those immediately preceding them, might have found so many examples of great and learned princesses, and other illustrious females, is totally silent with respect to the talents of women for the arts and sciences, and for the government of nations; and on the contrary, endeavours to establish the superiority of the sex, among other arguments, by the following; that the weaker woman has always found means to deceive the man who is stronger and more intelligent, and that the sacred scriptures themselves have extolled the cunning of females, which thus triumphs over the strength and sagacity of the other sex.* Badly as

* "Should any one assert, with Aristotle, that the males of all animals are stronger, more prudent, and more noble, let him be answered in the words of the more enlightened apostle: 'God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty: and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.' He then quotes the examples of Adam, Samson, Lot, David, Solomon, Job, Peter, and even of Jesus Christ, who were all deceived by the craft of women, and continues: "For the rest, if any one should say, that this tends rather to the disgrace of women, than redounds to their honour, they may answer him in this manner: If it be necessary that one of us should be deprived of some be-

Agrippa defended his cause, most of the subsequent panegyrists of the sex trod in his steps, and repeated the ludicrous arguments which he had adduced. Many learned females, likewise, took great pains to prove the superiority, or at least the perfect equality of their sex to ours. Some of the most celebrated women fell into the contrary extreme, and loudly declared, that the female sex had been so totally neglected by nature, and oppressed by the men, that females should strive to approach as near as possible to the latter. "How much," frequently exclaimed Ninon de l'Enclos, "are the women to be pitied! Their own sex is their greatest enemy. Their husbands tyrannize over them; their lovers despise them, and very often violate their honour. They are watched on every side, and precautions are incessantly employed to counteract them. They live continually in a state of fear and restraint, without support, and without aid. They have a thousand admirers, but not one single friend. Can it then be surprising, if they are capricious and dissembling? No sooner," she would add, "was I capable of reflecting, and

nefit, or even of life, I had rather that you were the sufferer than myself." p. 529.

comparing the condition of the sexes, than I found, that the better portion had fallen to the lot of the men, and I therefore resolved to become a man."* Such, also, were the sentiments entertained by one of Ninon's greatest admirers, Christina, queen of Sweden. Christina affected the masculine character in her dress, her conversation, and her whole behaviour.† Such was her real or pretended contempt for her own sex, that she never strove to conceal it, even on occasions when it was equally rude and unjust. At the court of France she seldom spoke with persons of her own sex, because she despised all women, on account of their ignorance; and on the other hand, she took delight in conversing with men, on every subject, good or bad, decent or indecent.‡ The celebrated Ninon de l'Enclos, was the only person of her sex on whom she bestowed any marks of esteem, during the visit with which she honoured her.§

* *Vie de Ninon*, p. 34, 35.

† *Mém. de Motteville*, IV. p. 444.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 455. "Elle faisoit profession de mépriser toutes les femmes à cause de leur ignorance, et prenoit plaisir de converser avec les hommes, sur les mauvaises matières de même que sur les bonnes."

§ *Ibid* p. 457. "Elle voulut voir une demoiselle qu'on appelloit Ninon, célèbre par son vice, par son libertinage, et la beauté de son esprit. Ce fut à elle seule de toutes les femmes, qu'elle vit en France, à qui elle donna quelques marques d'estime."

CHAPTER IV.

On the Influence of the Residence of Females at Courts upon the Morals of the Sex.

If the learning and attainments acquired by the fair sex in the sixteenth century, had been more general than they were, still they would scarcely have proved sufficient to protect female virtue against the new dangers and charms of a life at court. During the reign of Louis XII. the life and character of that king and his consort, kept the ladies and gentlemen of the court within proper bounds.* Under

* Respecting the purity of the morals of the sex in France, previous to the time of Francis I. we find some remarkable testimonies in Montagne. *Essais, liv. II. ch. 2.* "I have heard my father relate wonderful things of the chastity of his age. He said, that in a whole province there was scarcely a single woman of quality of bad reputation. He related extraordinary interviews which he had himself had with gentlewomen without any suspicion whatever." Montagne's father brought his wife a virgin innocence, notwithstanding he had served in Italy and was thirty-three years old when he was married in 1523.

Francis I. on the contrary, the virtue of few of the females, attendant on the court, was proof against its incessant dissipations and amusements, the continual artifices of bold and cunning seducers, and the influence of illustrious examples; nay, it even became an universally prevailing opinion, that the loss of female honour was a thing of no kind of consequence, but that it was creditable when it was compensated by wealth, honours, and the favour of the great. The French courtiers and officers taught their countrywomen the vicious practices which they had themselves learned of the Spanish and Italian courtezans.* With the arts of those females, the ladies of the French court assumed their boldness, and became the wooers, instead of waiting to be wooed.† Unfortunately, it was not the ladies of the court alone in whom all sense of virtue and decency was extinguished. The court infected the capital, and the capital communicated the contagion to the other cities of the kingdom.

* *Brantome Dames Gal.* I. p. 54. Many of the stories related by Brantome are so very obscene, that it is impossible even to quote them.

† *Ibid.* p. 81. "Plustot recherchantes, que recherchées."

Francis I. entertained a notion that all the females of rank and beauty in his dominions were destined to embellish his court, and that he might choose any of them he pleased for his private pleasure. The married and the single alike accounted it an extraordinary honour if they could contribute to the gratification of the great king; and it was universally known in what way the monarch wished to be served.* Husbands and fathers were not less rejoiced than their wives and daughters, at the notice which the king took of the latter. If any of them, prizing his honour more highly than the favour of the king, manifested signs of indignation or discontent, Francis imposed everlasting silence on the impatient sufferer by the severest menaces.† The count de Chateaubrian was

* *Brantome Dames Gal.* I. p. 360, 1. This passage is one of those which may be referred to, but not transcribed. It affords a striking proof of the excessive corruption of morals at the court of Francis I. The following words cannot offend the modesty of any of my readers: "She then made a low curtsey, thanking him with great humility for the honour he had conferred on her, of which she was not worthy, frequently recommending her husband to him for some promotion," &c.

† *Brantome Dames gal.* I. p. 17. "Le roy luy commenda sur la vie de ne luy faire nul mal, et que s'il luy faisoit la moindre chose, qu'il le tueroit, ou qu'il luy feroit trancher la teste, et pour cette nuit l'envoya dehors

the only one that caused his faithless wife to be bled to death; * nor would he have ventured upon such a step had not the king been a prisoner in Spain at the time when the count took this cruel revenge. On the return of Francis, the count was obliged to quit the kingdom, otherwise the royal lover had most assuredly sacrificed the jealous husband to the manes of the murdered countess.

Francis I. conceived the utmost contempt for all those who had no mistresses, in the French acceptation of the term. On the other hand, he was gratified to hear that his courtiers and officers were enamoured of this or the other lady, and offered them his services in behalf of their suit.† Among the ecclesiastics of high rank none was so distinguished for intrigue as the cardinal de Lorraine. It was asserted that there was not a female, either married or single, resident at the

et prit sa place. J'ay oui dire que non seulement cette dame, mais plusieurs autres obtindrent pareille sauvegarde du roy."

* *Galant. des Rois de France,* II. p. 67.

† *Brantome Dames Gal.* II. p. 360. " J'ai ouy conter à aucunes,, qu'il vouloit fort que les honnestes gentilshommes de sa cour fissent des maistresses, et s'ils n'en faisoient, il les estimoit des fats et des sots ; bien souvent il promestoit de les y servir, et leur en dire du bien."

court of Francis I. but what had been gained by the liberality of the cardinal de Lorraine, and been in training with him.* Brantome, after relating this anecdote, cannot forbear adding, that very few or none of the females at the court of Francis I. preserved a reputation free from reproach.†

At that court there were, nevertheless, some virtuous and irreproachable females. To their number belonged the queen, and also the amiable sister of the monarch. Margaret of Navarre accompanied Francis I. in all his diversions, and even in his hunting parties, and was always the gayest among the gay.‡ This vivacity of the fair princess, her blooming health, and also her widowhood, inspired the ad-

* *Brantome Dames Gal.* II. p. 362. "J'ay ouy conter que quand il arrivoit à la cour quelque fille ou dame nouvelle, qui fust belle, il la venoit aussitost accoster, et la raisonnant, il luy disoit, qu'il la vouloit dresser. Quel dresseur! Aussi pour lors disoit on, qu'il n'y avoit guerres de Dames ou filles residentes à la cour, ou fraischement venües qui ne fussent desbauchées où attrappées par la largesse dudit Monsieur le Cardinal."

† *Ibid.* "Et peu ou nulles sont elles sorties de cette cour femmes et filles de bien."

‡ *Avertissement des Nouv. de la reine Marguerite,* and *Nouvelle quatrième,* in which she relates her own history, under the following title: *Temeraire entreprise d'un gentilhomme contre une princesse de Flandres, et la honte qu'il en reçut. p.* 33, &c.

miral de Bonnivet, the handsomest man at the court of Francis I. and the greatest favourite of that monarch, with a notion that Margaret would not prove insensible to the tender passion, at least the passion of a gentleman so accomplished, and so high in the estimation of all the ladies as he imagined himself to be. The confident Bonnivet was not long before he made the illustrious fair acquainted with his wishes. The princess rejected his proposals, but without any marks of highly offended pride or deeply-wounded modesty. This encouraged Bonnivet in his hopes, and he imagined that nothing but a favourable opportunity was wanting to the completion of his wishes. To accelerate this opportunity, he invited the king and the whole court to one of his hunting-seats, and assigned the princess an apartment exactly over his own. When he heard at night that all was quiet in the chamber of the fair Margaret, he introduced himself, by means of a secret staircase and trap-door, into the apartment of the princess, and lay down beside her, in order to avail himself of the first moment when she should awake. As soon as the princess opened her eyes, Bonnivet commenced the attack, with a view to carry

her by storm. Margaret, however, was strong enough to disengage herself from the grasp of the ravisher; and when the latter, in spite of her obstinate resistance, still persisted in his purpose, she so plied him with her fists and nails, and called so loudly to her women for aid, that Bonnivet, overwhelmed with shame and much disfigured, was obliged to make a precipitate retreat. Next morning Bonnivet sent word to the king that he had been taken so ill during the night that he could not have the pleasure of seeing his sovereign again. Francis immediately departed, and only laughed heartily at his favourite, when he was informed of his unsuccessful attempt on his sister. Margaret was satisfied with the exposure of Bonnivet, and with the wounds, not very honourable to him, which she had inflicted. Most of my readers will agree with me in this reflection, that such an attempt as that of Bonnivet on the honour of an irreproachable princess, could only have been made in an age when female virtue was regarded as a non-entity, and all women as frail and accessible, though perhaps not in an equal degree.

From the experience which Francis I. had of his mistresses, that monarch could

not but believe, that no woman, at least no handsome woman, could be satisfied with one man, and preserve her fidelity to a husband or a lover.* Francis even engraved his creed with respect to the sex on a pane of glass at Chambord, where Brantome read the following words inscribed by the hand of the king: *Toute femme varie.*† An old friend of Brantome's observed, on occasion of this maxim, that the king had written him letters complaining bitterly of the infidelity of some of the females to whom he was most strongly attached. The keeper of the palace, who heard this remark, declared, that of all the women of whom the king had been enamoured, not one had remained faithful to her illustrious lover.‡ Diana de Poitiers passed out of the arms of Francis I. into those of the Dauphin, afterwards Henry II. and to him

* Even the mother of Francis I. could not have inspired him with more favourable sentiments of the sex. Her disappointed passion for the constable de Bourbon is well known. *Galant. des Rois de France,* II. p. 27.

† *Dames Gal.* II. p. 187.

‡ "Le concierge, qui nous ouyt, dit: c'est mon, vrayement, ne vous en pensez pas mocquer. car de toutes celles, que je luy ay jamais veüe et connue, je n'en ay veüe aucune qui n'allat au change plus, que ces chiens de la meute à la chasse du cerf."

she was not more constant than she had been to his father.*

During the reign of Henry II. and his three sons, in which period Catharine de Medicis constantly possessed the greatest, or, at least, a great influence at court, the causes which had rendered the French court under Francis I. a school and a theatre of debauchery, kept progressively increasing. These were the profusion of the sovereigns and their favourites; the number and splendour of their diversions; the concourse and continual commerce of persons of both sexes, of the highest rank, fortune, and beauty; seductive examples; want of respect for female virtue and virgin honour; and, lastly, the high prices paid for the sacrifice of female chastity and the resignation of maiden innocence. Under these circumstances, the court itself must necessarily have become more corrupt, and have communicated the infection of its example to the morals of the whole nation.

If Catharine de Medicis preserved her conjugal fidelity to her husband, and after his death maintained the sanctity of his memory and of her widowhood inviolate,

* *Galant. des Rois de France*, II. p. 74, &c.

which, however, is extremely doubtful,* she nevertheless, converted her court into an universal brothel, which she employed for the accomplishment of her ambitious or vindictive projects. She, therefore, made a practice of taking with her all, or at least the most beautiful of her ladies whithersoever she went, and even to war, that where bribery and intrigue failed of producing their effect, she might yet secure the victory by the charms of her attendants.†

After the death of Charles IX. Catharine de Medicis was exceedingly apprehensive lest her third son, Henry III. on his return to France, should marry the princess of Condé, a lady of great genius and extraordinary ambition, to whom Henry had formerly been attached, and lest he should in this case exclude her from the participation in the affairs of state. To avert this danger, she summoned the charms and the seductive arts of all her ladies to her aid. Mademoiselle de Chateauneuf was the first that succeeded in making an impression upon the heart of the new king; but this was

* *Journal de Henri III.* II. p. 440.

† *Journal de Henri III. par Etoile,* I. p. 164, 165.

soon effaced by the more powerful charms of Mademoiselle d'Elboeuf. She was obliged to yield in her turn to a Madame de Sauve, of whom Henry became really enamoured. Though this lady had conceived a violent passion for the king of Navarre, afterwards Henry IV. yet she served the purposes of the queen-mother, so far as to encourage the suit of Henry III. to wean him from his attachment to the princess of Condé, and to fix his affections on the princess of Lorraine, whom Henry very soon married.*

After the death of her husband, Catharine de Medicis used every possible expedient to gain the two princes of the house of Bourbon, the king of Navarre, and the prince of Condé. The former had a just claim to the regency; and the most powerful families and parties in the kingdom, the Montmorencies, the Chatillons, the calvinists, and even the majority of the catholics encouraged the king of Navarre to enforce his pretensions. This Catharine de Medicis prevented by means of the duchess de Montpensier, who had such power over the king, that she was known at court by no other appellation

* *Galant. des Rois de France*, II. p. 168, 169.

than that of the Syren.* After the duchess de Montpensier had by her ambition excited the jealousy of the queen-mother, she assigned to the most beautiful of her *filles d'honneur*, Mademoiselle de Rouet, and Mademoiselle de Limeuil, the task of subduing the king of Navarre and the prince of Condé. These ladies took contrary ways to the hearts which they designed to conquer. Mademoiselle de Rouet was so loud and enthusiastic in her praises of the king of Navarre, that the prince could not forbear enquiring the reasons why the fair female entertained so favourable an opinion of him. Mademoiselle de Limueil, on the contrary, declared in every company that the prince of Condé, on account of his inconstancy, was the last person she could love; till the prince was at length instigated to teach her a different lesson. Both these young ladies atoned for their compliance with the injunctions of the queen-mother, by the loss of their honour. Both became pregnant, and the fair Limeuil with such public scandal, that the regent was obliged to forbid her the court.†

* *Galant. des Rois de France*, II. p. 144.

† *Ibid.* p. 143, 147, 157.

Mary, queen of Scots, during her union with Francis II. as well as the two queens, Elizabeth of Austria and Louisa of Lorraine, led still more irreproachable lives than Catharine de Medicis. On the contrary, Margaret of Navarre, the daughter of the latter, rivalled the Messalinas of ancient and modern times, and changed her lovers much oftener than her brother Henry III. changed his worthless minions. Admitting that many charges in the satires on this queen, published during her life-time, were exaggerated; still it cannot be denied, that her intrigues with men of all descriptions, even with the meanest in rank and the plainest in person, were as monstrous as her beauty, her talents, her accomplishments, and her many virtues were brilliant and admirable.* Queen

* The two pieces which are most severe upon the first wife of Henry IV. are the *Divorce Satyrique, où les Amours de la Reine Marguerite*, in the fourth volume of the *Journal de Henri III.* and the *Manifeste d'Henri IV. sur son Divorce d'avec la Reine Marguerite*, in the second volume of the *Galant. des Rois de France*, p. 240, &c. I am astonished, that even Bayle should have regarded this pretended manifesto as genuine. From the *Mémoires du duc de Sully* alone, it appears, that Henry IV. at the time when he was most solicitous to obtain a divorce from his first wife, could not have permitted such a defamatory publication; if, however, it were not of itself wholly incredible, that a great king could, in the face of all Europe, have brought such charges against his wife as are contained in the forged manifesto.

Margaret created by her amours such an intolerable scandal, that her own brother was obliged to forbid her his court, and to dismiss most of her confidential attendants, that he might personally institute a rigid examination into the previous conduct of his sister, who was at that time living apart from her husband.* Henry III. sent the king of Navarre his wife, together with an account of the manner in which she had conducted herself. The king refused to receive her. This and other consequences of the severe measures adopted by Henry III. towards his sister, produced the most urgent intreaties from him to his brother-in-law, not to divorce his wife ; and at length caused him to defend Margaret's character from all imputations, and even against the very charges which he himself had transmitted. In this vindication he says, among other things, " kings are liable to deception, which it is often impossible for them to avoid; and the most virtuous princesses are exposed to calumnies. You know, brother, how your late mother was defamed."—Henry IV. laughed on reading this vindication, and said, in the presence

* *Etoile Journal de Henri III.* Vol. I. p. 403, 4.

of the whole court, " in truth the king does me great honour by his letters. In the first he calls me a cuckold, and in the second a son of a whore. I am exceedingly obliged to him." Among the ebullitions of the impetuous passions of the queen of Navarre, the following circumstance is particularly worthy of notice. Margaret was enamoured of a gentleman named La Molle, at the same time that her friend Madame de Nevers was in love with another, of the name of Coconas. Both the lovers were accused of a conspiracy and publicly decapitated, after which their heads were fixed upon poles. The axe which dispatched them did not extinguish the love of their ladies. The first night after their lovers had suffered, the two heroines repaired in disguise to the place of execution, removed the heads with their own hands, caused them to be embalmed, and preserved them among the dearest pledges of their love.*

Henry IV. while king of Navarre, treated the princess of Condé in the same manner as Henry III. had behaved towards his own sister. M. de Noailles, for whom

* *Mémoir. de Nevers*, I. p. 75. *Journal de Henri III.* Tom. IV. p. 491.

the princess of Condé was reported to have an attachment, was once playing before the court on the lute and accompanying it with his voice. He sung, in particular, the following words in a manner uncommonly pathetic:

Je ne vois rien qui me contente
Absent de ma divinité.

He often and passionately repeated the word *divinité*, on which the king of Navarre exclaimed: "don't call my aunt so, for she is too fond of things appertaining to humanity."*

It is, perhaps, more astonishing that the professed mistresses of kings should have secret lovers, than that married princesses should allow themselves that indulgence. Henry II. loved Diana de Poitiers, whom, after his father's death, he had created duchess de Valentinois, even in her declining years, with extraordinary fervor. Even at that period, the duchess was not satisfied with the attentions of her royal lover. She compelled, as it were by force, the marshal de Cossé-Brissac, to whom she had made an unreserved declaration of love, to return it with all the tokens of

* *Journal de Henri III.* Tom. I. p. 126.

the reciprocal passion.* The duchess did not give herself so much trouble to conceal her infidelity, as Henry II. took to keep his amour with the fair Hamilton from the knowledge of his aged mistress.† Brantome saw the duchess, who, till her death, retained the same power over the king, in her seventieth year, and thought her so beautiful, that he could scarcely have supposed her to be half that age. ‡

Henry II. was, however, more fortunate in one respect than Charles IX, for he remained ignorant of the infidelity of his mistress. Mademoiselle Touchet, the mistress of Charles IX. conceived a passion for the young Monluc with whom she carried on a brisk correspondence. The king was once informed that Mademoiselle Touchet had received a *billet-doux* from Monluc. In order to ascertain the truth, Charles invited a great number of ladies, and among the rest his mistress, to supper; and at the same time procured twelve dexterous pick-pockets, with directions to ease the ladies of their pockets

* *Galanter. des Rois de France*, II. p. 123.

† *Ibid.* p. 133.

‡ *Dames Gal.* II. p. 228, 9.

or work-bags. In Touchet's pocket or work-bag the king actually found a billet, and the receiver could not deny that Monluc was the writer of it. The king soon afterwards married his mistress to Balzac d'Entragues, in order to detach her from her passion for Monluc.*

If the mistresses of kings gave free scope to their passions, it is but natural to suppose, that still less did the other ladies of the court set bounds to their caprices and their appetites. Many of the ladies at the courts of Charles IX. and Henry III. had so far renounced all sense of female modesty, as to have men servants to dress and undress them, to put them to bed, and even to assist them in changing their chemises. Brantome observes, that this want of decorum was very often productive of improper familiarities.†

Henry III. carried his unnatural passion for his minions to such a height, that, like Nero, he was formally married to one of them, named Maugiron. ‡

* *Galant. des Rois de France,* II. p. 161, 3.

† *Dames Galant.* II. p. 37. "Car les levant, couchant, deshabillant, chaussant, deschaussant et leur baillant leurs chemises, commes j'ay veu beaucoup de filles à la cour, et ailleurs qui n'en faisoient aucune difficulté, ny scrupule."

‡ *Galant. des Rois de France,* II. p. 182.

Among the ladies of his court, there were many who were attached to beautiful persons of their own sex with all the ardour of the most passionate lovers.* This unnatural propensity in men was extinguished, at least for a time, at the French court, during the reign of Henry IV. and several of his successors; but the unnatural passion of the other sex continued without interruption from the time of Henry III. till the final destruction of the monarchy.

Henry III. and his minions lived like women, and dressed like women.† The ladies of the court lived like men, and dressed like men, or rather they dressed much more immodestly than men had ever ventured to do. At a magnificent entertainment given by the king, at Plessis les Tours, the ladies waited at table in masculine attire. They were half naked, and wore their hair loose like brides.‡ La-

* *Brantome Dames Gal.* I. p. 204, 5.

† *Etoile Journal de Henri III.* Tom. I. p. 176, 203, 204. "Le roy faisoit des ballets et tournois, ou il se trouvoit ordinairement habillé en femme, ouvrant son pourpoint, et decouvrant sa gorge, y portant un collier de perles et trois collets de toile, deux à fraises, et un renversé ainsi que les portoient les dames de la cour."

‡ *Journal de Henri III.* Tom. I. p. 205. "Les dames vestues de verd en habit d'hommes, à moitié nues, et ayant leurs cheveux épars comme epousées," &c.

dies of this description could not be offended if the king sometimes took improper liberties with them, and ordered his attendants to follow his example.*

Kings and princes set the example of excesses with respect to women, and it was they also that afforded examples of the greatest patience, under the most manifest proofs of the infidelity of their mistresses. The forbearance of the sovereign disposed his courtiers to shew an equal degree of indulgence. During the reign of Henry III. however, many husbands took a cruel revenge on their inconstant wives, whom they kept to languish in perpetual confinement, or put to death by poison and the dagger, after they had sometimes tortured their lovers before their eyes in the most inhuman manner.† The conduct of Villequier, a favourite of Henry III. attracted the greatest attention. In the palace at Poitiers, where his apartments were not far from those of the king, this man

* *Galant. des Rois de France*, II. p. 182. "Forcer les dames derriere les tapisseries, et ordonner à ses domestiques de suivre son exemple," &c.

† *Brantome Dames Galant.* II. p. 10, 11, 34. "La moindre punition, qu'aucuns de nos grands font à leurs femmes, c'est de les mettre en chartre perpetuelle, au pain et a l'eau, et les faire mourir, ou les empoisonnent, ou les tuent."

killed his pregnant wife with five wounds of a poniard, and besides his wife, her maid, who had aided her in her intrigues. This murder excited the more surprize, as the perpetrator had suffered his wife to live for fifteen years just as she pleased; as he had slept and joked with her shortly before the commission of the bloody deed; and, lastly, as he resided in the king's palace, where any act of violence was so much the more criminal. Henry III. so far from punishing this atrocity, shewed the murderer the same partiality as ever, and hence it was concluded, that the king himself had given orders for the barbarous deed.*

The court of Henry III. where, according to the testimony of a writer of the highest authority, fornication was publicly practised by the ladies and regarded as virtue, was so corrupt, that it will scarcely be credited, that, under a monarch like Henry IV. the morals of both sexes should have been still more depraved; and

* *Journal de Henri III.* Tom. I. p. 215. "This murder was thought cruel, being committed on a woman pregnant with two children, and strange, as perpetrated in the palace of the king, his majesty being there, and still more at court, where fornication is publicly practised by the ladies, who regard it as a virtue."

yet nothing is more certain, as all those can testify who have read the journals and other historical chronicles of the reigns of those two monarchs. The principal cause of the increasing immorality of the French court is to be ascribed to Henry IV. himself. Francis I. and most of his successors had professed mistresses, for whose sakes they did many things which they ought to have left undone, and neglected many others which they ought to have done; but none of the French kings since the time of Francis I. ever sacrificed the dignity of his crown and person,* the welfare of his kingdom,† the repose of his life, and the peace of his house,‡ the majesty of the laws and respect for the most natural principles of decorum, the sacred ties of marriage and of friend-

* Henry gave promises of marriage to several of his mistresses, especially to the duchess de Beaufort and the Marquise de Verneuil. *Sully*, I. p. 525, 545. II. p. 332. Henry would certainly have married the fair Gabrielle d'Estrées had not this mistress been snatched from him by a death equally sudden and terrible.

† Among many instances, the best known is the dangerous expedition which he undertook in the habit of a peasant to visit the fair Gabrielle, who rewarded this adventure with disdain. *Amours du grand Alcandre*, in the fourth volume of the *Journ. de Henri III.* p. 348, 9.

‡ See numberless passages in *Sully*, III. p. 50, 68.

ship;* the counsels of his most zealous friends and servants, frequently those friends and servants themselves, nay, even his own right reason, so often and to such a degree, at the shrine of his mistresses as Henry IV. He allowed the officers of his court and kingdom to shew the same disregard of the laws in which he indulged himself; and was even pleased when the most respectable men were overtaken by the same faults to which he was himself subject.† Had Henry IV. not been so great a hero, so wise and good a sovereign, so faithful a friend, and so placable an adversary as he actually was, his attachment to mistresses could not have failed to render him one of the most despicable of all the kings of France.

In common life, and still more among princes, the way in which a thing is done is very often of much greater consequence

* The marshal de Bassompierre was betrothed to the daughter of the duke de Montmorency. Henry IV. obliged him to relinquish his fair and beloved bride, that he might marry her to another, for whom she felt not the least attachment. *Mémoir. de Bassomp.* I. p. 187, 190.

† *Journal de Henri IV.* Vol. III. p. 363. "Cet homme (le chancelier de Chiverny) dans une charge si serieuse et si eminente, ne cachoit point sa passion; et le roy qui eut voulu que tout le monde eut été aussi pris que lui, étoit bien aise, qu'un tel personnage se trouvât embarrassé du même mal que le sien."

than the thing itself; or, in other words, public example, good or bad, is productive of infinitely more mischief or benefit than the good or bad action that is performed. This reflection cannot fail to present itself to every one who compares the history of Henry IV. and his mistresses, with that of most of his predecessors and successors.

Francis I. Henry II. and his sons, kept professed mistresses and acknowledged the children which these mistresses bore them. None of these monarchs took such liberties with his mistresses, or allowed them such freedoms as Henry IV. Not content with having his beloved Gabrielle, then marquise de Monceaux, continually by his side, he kissed her often and in public before the whole court, or in full council to which she accompanied him; and the marquise would every where take off the mask, which it was then customary to wear, from his face, in order to kiss him.* As duchess de Beaufort, the same mistress caused her second

‡ *Journal de Henri IV.* Vol. II. p. 325. "Comme de fait il la baisoit devant tout le monde, et elle lui en plein conseil." And p. 333, "ayant tousjours la marquise à son coté qui le demasquoit, et le baisoit partout où il entrait."

son to be baptized with all the pomp which it had been usual to display only at the christening of the *enfans de France*, or the legitimate children of the French monarchs. After the ceremony, the king was ashamed of what had been done; and when Sully justly remonstrated on the subject, he could find no better excuse, than that his orders had been exceeded.* The courtiers regarded this excuse as so nugatory, that they continued to give the second son of the duchess de Beaufort the title of Monsieur, which in France belonged only to the eldest brother of the king or to the heir apparent to the throne.†

After the death of the duchess de Beaufort, Henry IV. for the sake of the marquise de Verneuil, forgot still oftener than before what he owed to his royal dignity, to his newly-married queen, to the whole nation, and to public decorum. The young queen Mary de Medicis had scarcely arrived at Paris, when Henry commanded the duchess de Nemours, the first lady of honour to the queen, to present his mistress to her sovereign. The duchess de Ne-

* *Sully*, I. p. 538.

† *Ibid.*

mours demurred, saying, that she should ruin herself in the opinion of the queen. Henry, so far from attending to this rational remonstrance, repeated his command, contrary to his custom, in a harsh tone, and obliged the duchess de Nemours, in spite of all the laws of propriety and decorum, to introduce to the queen her favoured rival. Her majesty was extremely embarrassed at this visit of the marquise, and received her very coldly.* The artful Leonora Conchini soon found means to pacify the mind of the jealous queen, and prevailed upon her to treat the marquise de Verneuil with civility. After this change, the king thought he might lay aside all restraint in his connexion with his mistress. He took her into the palace, and assigned her apartments so near those of the queen, that he could not go to see either of them, but his visit was immediately known to the other. Hence arose perpetual broils, which caused so much the more scandal, as the young queen and the marquise de Verneuil were both pregnant at once, and the mistress equally violent and haughty, used the

* *Journal de Henri IV.* Vol. III. p. 97, 398.

most indecent language towards the queen. *

The more glory Henry IV. acquired as a sovereign, and the more he advanced in years and experience, so much the more he disregarded the public opinion. While he subjected the marquise de Verneuil as a state criminal to the most rigid examinations, not with a view to punish or to get rid of her, but only to humble her pride, he chose a new mistress in Mademoiselle de Beuil, afterwards countess de Moret. This new mistress he married to the young Chanvalon, in the same manner as he had married the beautiful Gabrielle d'Estrées. The husband, it is true, was allowed the honour of lying with his wife, but in a certain chamber, lighted with a great number of wax candles, and guarded by several attendants to prevent him from enforcing his rights. The next night Henry slept with the young wife, and did not rise till the hour of two in the afternoon. It was said, at Paris, that the husband had slept the same night in a chamber above that where the king lay,

* *Journal de Henri IV.* Vol. III. p. 97, 398. "Elles étoient toutes deux grosses---elles étoient logées si près l'une de l'autre que l'on ne s'en pouvoit cacher, et c'étoit une brouillerie perpetuelle."

which furnished occasion for a pun that cannot be translated into any other language.*

Never were mistresses less deserving of such sacrifices as Henry IV. made, than the duchess de Beaufort, the marquise de Verneuil, and the countess de Moret. The fair Gabrielle, after she became the mistress of the king, unblushingly continued the connexion she had previously maintained with the duke de Bellegarde. The most infallible proof of her intimacy with the duke, was the premature birth of her first son, who received the name of Cæsar, and, in spite of all the laws of nature, was acknowledged by Henry IV. This acknowledgment would have been so much the more ridiculous in any other monarch than Henry, since an old physician, at the commencement of the king's acquaintance with Gabrielle, candidly informed him, that an indisposition of the young lady, concerning which he had been consulted, was owing to a pregnancy of six months; and circumstances completely confirmed his report. With a lo-

* *Journal de Henri IV.* Vol. III. p. 241. "On disoit, que son mari étoit couché en un petit galetas au-dessus de la chambre du roy, et ainsi étoit dessus sa femme, mais il y avoit un plancher entre deux."

ver whom such a circumstance would not startle great liberties may be taken; and this the fair Gabrielle was not backward at doing. An accident had nearly opened the eyes of the fascinated monarch. Henry one day told his favourite, who complained of being unwell, that he was obliged to take an excursion of some miles to transact some business or other. The duke de Bellegarde immediately sought to profit by his absence; and was conducted by the confidential servant of the fair Gabrielle into a little cabinet contiguous to the bed-chamber of her mistress. As soon as the rest of the company had quitted the fair patient, the lover sallied from his hiding-place. The lovers had scarcely begun to indulge their reciprocal passion, when the terrified chamber-maid brought the unwelcome tidings that the king had returned and was just at hand. The duke de Bellegarde had barely time to slip into the little cabinet where he had before been concealed, and the door of which was locked upon him.* The king, on his arrival, immediately demanded some sweetmeats, which he well knew were in the

* See a detailed account of this extraordinary circumstance in the *Mémoires de Sully*, I. p. 386, 7.

closet. The anxious fair one replied, that her chamber-maid had the key, and was just gone out. This answer excited the king's suspicions, and he ordered the door to be broken open. As no person was at the moment at hand, he himself kicked several times against the door with the greatest violence, notwithstanding the complaints of his mistress, that the noise made her head-ache worse. The king's repeated attempts to force open the door obliged the duke de Bellegarde to leap out of the window of the cabinet into the garden, and he was so fortunate as to alight without any material injury. As soon as the chamber-maid observed that the lover had escaped, she made her appearance with the key of the cabinet, and a thousand apologies for having kept his majesty waiting. Henry was agreeably surprized at not finding what he had dreaded. The fair Gabrielle burst into a flood of tears at the behaviour of the king and his groundless jealousy, and Henry not only acknowledged that he had wronged her, but even begged pardon on his knees of his artful mistress.*

* *Etoile Journ. de Henri III.* Vol. IV. p. 365, 6. *Galant. des Rois de France*, II. p. 201, &c.

The marquise de Verneuil and the countess de Moret were both attached to the prince de Joinville, as the fair Gabrielle had been to the duke de Bellegarde. The former wrote many tender letters to her gallant. One of the most passionate of these was given by the prince to the marquise de Villars, to convince that lady of the strength of his attachment for her, and the extinction of his former flame. No sooner had the marquise de Villars got this letter into her hands, than she posted away with it to the king, in the hope of ruining the marquise de Verneuil, whom she mortally hated. Henry IV. in the most violent agitation, carried the letter to his friend Sully, and then went to the marquise to reproach her with her infidelity and ingratitude. The mistress of the monarch, accustomed to such ebullitions, maintained, with truly astonishing audacity and composure, that she had not written the letter, but that it was a malicious fabrication of the prince's. This protestation tended so much the more to pacify the king, because the marquise appealed to the severe judgment of the duke de Sully, who, as Henry well knew, was no friend to his favourite. The duke and the king instituted a rigid examination of

the papers relating to this process in the presence of the accused. During this investigation, the king spoke several times with such vehemence, and the marquise wept so loud, that both were heard in the apartments at a considerable distance. The business ended in the reconciliation of the accuser and the accused, and in the exile both of the prince de Joinville and the marquise de Villars.* Sully concludes his narrative of this affair with the observation, that the prince de Joinville might think himself fortunate in having to do with a monarch like Henry IV. especially as he soon afterwards engaged in a similar intrigue with the countess de Moret. The latter would inevitably have been surprized with the prince had not the marshal de Bassompierre given them a timely warning.† Such was the dissolute life of that lady, that she was classed by her contemporaries among the victims of public pleasure at the court.‡

Nothing was more natural than for the courtiers to follow the example of their

* *Mémoires de Sully*, III. p. 75, 76. *Journal de Henry IV.* Vol. III. p. 402, 403.

† *Bassompiere*, I. p. 205.

‡ *Mém. de Sully*, as above.

sovereign, and the ladies to imitate the mistresses of the king. The chronicles and journals of those times inform us, that this was actually the case.

Under Henry IV. the seduction of females was first reduced to a science; and this science was held in higher estimation at court than any other of the arts either of war or peace. Never did the French court contain so great a number of beautiful and amiable persons of both sexes as in the time of Henry IV.* Three of the handsomest and most accomplished young men were denominated *the dangerous* (les dangereux); † and with these might justly have been classed the duke de Bellegarde, who was said to be the greatest favourite of the ladies. ‡ The greater was the number of the wives and virgins whom these dangerous men had debauched, and of those with whom they maintained a connexion at the same time,

* In the year 1598, twelve young gentlemen and the same number of ladies, danced the *Brantle*, as it was called, at court. The court was so delighted with the sight of the beautiful dancers, as to call for a repetition of the dance, of which there was never afterwards any instance. *Bassomp.* I. p. 49.

† *Ibid.* p. 168. "Carmail, Termes et moy, qu'on nommoit alors les dangereux."

‡ "Le plus cheris des Dames." *Mém. partic.* I. p. 74.

so much the more were they respected and beloved.

The marshal de Bassompierre had, in 1608, three mistresses at once, and was as proud as a hero can possibly be of the most glorious victory, that, at an entertainment at court, he paid so much attention to them all, that none of them was jealous of the others.* Among these three ladies was Mademoiselle d'Entragues, a sister of the marquise de Verneuil. With this young lady he frequently passed the night; and yet not only his illustrious rivals, but even the mother of his mistress remained perfectly ignorant of the illicit intrigue.† This address enhanced the reputation of the lover. At length it became known, that the fair d'Entragues was in the seventh month of her pregnancy. This happened about the same time that a husband discovered the connexion between his wife and the marshal de Bassompiere, and that the creditors of the latter demanded payment of more than a million and a half of livres, though he

* *Mém.* I. p. 168, 171. "Je fus ravi de voir que j'avois contenté toutes celles, avec qui j'avois d'intelligence, et que pas une n'eut pris d'ombrage d'une autre: ce qui est bien rare en de telles occasions."

† *Ibid.* I. p. 155, 158.

knew not where to raise a single sou.* All these debts and debaucheries did the marshal de Bassompierre not the least injury in the opinion either of the king, of the fair sex, or of the public in general, but rather tended to strengthen his influence and to augment his reputation. Bassompierre was one of the favourite confidants of Henry IV. The queen preferred a game with this debauchee to the company of any other person. Being wounded in a tournament, he received incessant visits from the princesses and ladies of the court, and the queen thrice sent her maids of honour to comfort and amuse him.† Not long after his recovery, he went for about three weeks to Lorraine. During his absence, not a day passed but what the ladies dispatched couriers to him with

* *Mém.* I. p. 339. "Je me trouvay à ce retour en de très grandes perplexités, non seulement à cause de cette affaire-là, mais aussi de plus de seize mille livres, que je devois à Paris. Il'y avoit aussi brouillerie dans une maison, entre un mary et une femme, dont j'étois le principal sujet, qui me mettoit en peine. Mais plus que tout une fille grosse de sept mois, que je n'attendois que l'heure, qu'on s'en aperçust, avec un grand scandale, et une mauvaise fortune pour moy."

† *Mém. de Bassomp.* p. 171. "Il ne se peut dire le soin que les dames eurent de me faire sçavoir souvent de leurs nouvelles, et de m'envoier de couriers, des lettres, et des presens. L'estoile de Venus étoit bien ascendant sur moi alors."

letters and presents; and, on his return, four of the most beautiful ladies went to meet him as the favourite of the court.* But the most remarkable proof of attachment and respect was given by the constable de Montmorency, who, of his own accord, selected him for the bridegroom of his daughter, who was not only one of the greatest beauties of the age, but was also one of the greatest fortunes in all France.† As Henry IV. had been an admirer of the fair Montmorency, he would not suffer the dangerous Bassompierre to receive her hand, but destined her for the wife of the Prince of Condé, under the idea that the latter was too much addicted to the chace to pay attention to fine women. Bassompiere yielded to the wishes of the king, but with a pain which is not less extraordinary in this

* *Mém. de Bassomp.* p. 187, &c.

† The proposal of Henry IV. to Bassompierre to relinquish the fair Montmorency has so much originality, that the reader will not be displeased to find it subjoined: "Alors il me respondit, apres un grand soupir, Bassompierre je te veux parler en ami. Je suis devenu non seulement amoureux, mais furieux et outrè de Mademoiselle de Montmorency. Si tu l'epouses et qu'elle t'aime, je te hairai: si elle m'aimoit tu me hairois. Il vaut mieux que cela ne soit point cause de rompre notre bonne intelligence: car je t'aime d'affection et d'inclination." *Mém.* I. p. 187.

universal gallant, than the choice of the constable and the proposal of Henry IV. On the day of the espousal of his former bride, Bassompierre shut himself up for two days and nights, and pined away, in total abstinence from sleep and food, to such a degree, that, when one of his friends drew him from his retirement, and took him to court, the whole court was astonished that in so short a time he had become so pale and so meagre.

The duke de Bellegarde was a nobleman neither less dangerous, nor less beloved and esteemed than the marshal de Bassompierre. Bellegarde was in love at the same time with the fair Gabrielle, the no less beautiful princess of Lorraine, and her mother, the duchess dowager de Guise: and all these ladies were passionately attached to him.* He managed the two former with such address, that though they had once entertained a mortal antipathy to each other as rivals in beauty, they now became the most inseparable friends. He likewise concealed from the mother his passion for the daughter, with

* *Journal de Henri III.* Vol. IV. p. 370, &c. *Journal de Henri IV.* Vol. II. p. 302, 303. *Galant. des Rois de France,* II. p. 208, &c.

such dexterity, that the former was totally ignorant of his connexion with the princess, till after the latter had been debauched. The dowager duchess de Guise was so fascinated with the duke de Bellegarde, that she could no longer believe what had formerly been told her of his participation in the murder of her husband who was assassinated at Blois. Such was the princess whom the duke de Sully describes as a pattern not only of female loveliness, but also of female virtue! * It is not difficult to conceive, how low other ladies must have sunk, in an age concerning which Sully informs us, that it had entirely lost all true notions of virtue and vice.

* "In any other age in which people had not lost, as in the present, the real notion of virtue and vice, this woman would have been the ornament of her sex, for the disposition of her heart and the qualities of her mind. She possessed an integrity so genuine and so natural, that it was evident she never had a thought either to do wrong herself, or to advise others to do so; and, at the same time, such was the goodness of her heart and temper, that she was a stranger to the slightest emotion of hatred, of malignity, of envy, or merely of ill-humour. Never, I think, was the conversation of any woman so replete with graces; never did any other unite a more agreeable simplicity and *naiveté*, with an understanding so refined and so acute. Her repartees were seasoned with wit and vivacity; she was found to be at once sweet-tempered and sprightly, tranquil and gay." I. p. 376.

The more amiable were the gentlemen and ladies at the court of Henry IV. the more seductive was their example to the other classes of the people. The men of the middling ranks were as shameless, or even still more indecorous than the cavaliers of the court. A young counsellor of the parliament opened his declarations of love, by exhibiting to the fair the extraordinary gifts with which Nature had endowed him. This method the Faun long practised with success; but he was at length punished in the part with which he had so often offended against public decorum, by the shot of a cross-bow, in the house of a beautiful lady, whose passions he endeavoured to inflame by his usual expedient.* This instance of shameless indecency is a stronger proof of the lamentable state of morals under Henry IV. than the information, that it was then very common for young females who had been deflowered, to throw the fruits of their illicit commerce

* Un jeune conseillier de la cour, pour se faire aimer des dames, tenoit une procedure un peu bien vilaine et bien orde, leur faisant ordinairement montrer de ses pièces principales pour les mettre en rut et en appetit." *Journal de Henri IV.* Vol. III. p. 283.

into privies.* At this very period, not only Spain and Italy, but France likewise, furnished examples of pious fools espousing notorious courtezans under the idea of saving christian souls from perdition.†

Scarcely ever were a father and son so totally different from each other in respect to disposition and propensities as Henry IV. and Louis XIII. The former found his highest gratification in the enjoyment of beautiful women; the latter regarded the sex with perfect indifference. Mere accident brought him a few times into the company of his young and beautiful wife, and to nothing but chance did Louis XIV. and his brother owe their existence.‡ Among the ladies of his court, Louis XIII. shewed such a partiality, first to Mademoiselle de Hautefort, and afterwards to Mademoiselle de la Fayette, that he was reported to be enamoured of them. This attachment, however, was innocent

* *Journal de Henri IV.* Vol. II. p. 327.

† "Que dirons nous d'aucuns qui epousent des putains et courtisanes qui ont esté tres fameuses, comme l'on fait assez coustumiérement en France, mais surtout en Espagne et en Italie, lesquels se persuadent de gagner les œuvres de misericorde, par *librer una anima christiana del infierno,* comme ils disent, en la sainte voye. *Brantome Dames Gal.* I. p. 148.

‡ *Mém. de Motteville,* I. p. 82.

as the love of disembodied spirits; for, when the king conversed with these fair females, it was not on the subject of the tender passion, but of birds, hounds, and the chace.* Henry IV. was fond of conviviality and splendid amusements. Louis XIII. preferred solitude and the chace to all other pleasures; and hence his court became gloomy and joyless as the disposition of his soul.

We should be grossly mistaken were we to suppose that Louis XIII. curbed by his example the licentiousness of the morals of the court, in the same degree as it had been encouraged by that of Henry IV. Corruption of morals is one of those effects which cease not immediately with the causes by which they are produced. If the frigid gravity and ardent devotion of Louis XIII. occasioned any amendment, it was not so much in morals themselves, as in the exterior behaviour of his courtiers. They lived nearly in the same manner as under Henry IV. but they took care not to furnish such occasion for public scandal as they had formerly given. According to all appearance, the Spanish gallantry, which was in great vogue with

* *Mém. de Motteville*, I. p. 51, 77, 80.

no inconsiderable portion of the court, during the reign of Louis XIII. contributed more than the example of the king to render the gentlemen less enterprizing and the ladies less complaisant than they had been under Henry IV. Anne of Austria was a professed friend to that species of gallantry; and, in the genuine spirit of this gallantry, she tolerated the addresses both of the duke de Montmorency and the duke of Buckingham.* She was, on the other hand, not a little alarmed, when the latter was proceeding to take greater liberties than the *Dames du Palais* at Madrid allowed their admirers.† If the cardinal de Richelieu proposed theses on the tender passion,‡ it was because the metaphysics of love had become the prevailing fashion of the times. He hated love as a serious or violent passion, and preferred those beauties whose favours he could purchase.

In the history of the fair sex, the reign of Louis XIII. is remarkable for the education of all those ladies who soon afterwards acted an important part in the

* *Motteville*, I. p. 15, 17.

† *Ibid.* p. 21.

‡ *Thomas*, p. 118.

times of the *Fronde*; and also for the first appearance of such Aspasias as Marion de Lormes, Ninon de l'Enclos, and Madame de Maintenon, who afterwards attained such power and celebrity. Marion de Lormes resembled the distinguished courtezans who had long frequented the courts and the great towns of Spain and Italy. Ninon never sold her favours but on one single occasion,* when she disposed of the first enjoyment of her charms to the cardinal de Richelieu, whose last favours she is said to have received.† She resigned her person to every one who inspired her with love, but only for the time that her passion lasted. This she did from inclination and from principle, deeming continual variety in love, and constancy in friendship, the highest happiness in life. The most celebrated poets and historians, the greatest heroes, and the most accomplished courtiers, during the reigns of Louis XIII. and XIV. were successively her lovers; and, after they had made room

* So it is asserted by the author of the *Vie de Ninon de l'Enclos* prefixed to the letters written in her name.

† See Voltaire's Letter concerning Ninon in the *Hist. lit. de Femmes Franç.* I. p. 317, &c. "Je vous dirai d'abord en historiographe exact, que le cardinal de Richelieu eut les premieres faveurs de Ninon, qui probablement eut les dernieres de ce grand ministre."

for others, became her friends. Sometimes they succeeded each other so rapidly as to render it doubtful who was the father of the child with whom Ninon was pregnant. A dispute concerning the honor of paternity arose on one of these occasions between the count d'Etrées and the abbé d'Effiat. They, at length, agreed to settle the point by drawing lots. The lot decided in favour of the count, who accordingly educated the child of which Ninon was delivered as his son. Ninon was so far from laying claim to the character of a *femme honnête*, that she often said, that she had always preferred but one prayer to God, which was this : " O my God, make me an honest man, but never make me an honest woman !"* Notwithstanding these sentiments and this conduct, gentlemen and ladies of the highest rank introduced their sons and daughters to her, that they might enter the great world under her direction, and acquire in her house the tone of good company.† There was a period in the life of Ninonin which, though her modes of

* " Mon Dieu, faites de moi un honnête homme, et n'en faites jamais une honnête femme." *Hist. litt. de fem. Franç.* I. p. 319.

† *Ibid*

thinking and acting were not altered, she, however, became more temperate in both. This change took place on the unfortunate termination of the passion of the son whom she had borne to the earl of Jersey, an English nobleman. The chevalier de Villiers, who knew not that he was Ninon's son, conceived the most violent passion for his mother, and at length became so impatient for its gratification, that Ninon was obliged to disclose the secret of her relationship to him. This intelligence had such an effect on the unfortunate young man, that he immediately withdrew, and put a period to his life. Ninon, at the time that she inspired her son with such a vehement passion, was sixty years old.* Mademoiselle de l'Enclos, as she was still called even in her maturer years, rendered lovers happy at the age of seventy and even eighty.† She certainly possessed many of the virtues of a man of honour;‡ and had a great share in creating the *bon ton* of society in France. These virtues and these merits were, how-

* *Vie de Ninon*, p. 24.

† *Ibid.* p. 30, 31.

‡ See the history of her transactions with Gourville, p. 15, 16, in the *Vie de Ninon*.

ever, far overbalanced by her female foibles and misconduct. She was the first woman in France that not only publicly practised the profession of refined gallantry, but reduced it to a system, and perhaps did much greater mischief by her precepts than by her example. If families of the highest distinction held forth Ninon as a pattern to their children, must not the arts of gallantry and intrigue have appeared a superior recommendation, and conjugal attachment and fidelity contemptible in the eyes of the fairest and noblest of the youth of both sexes?

During the regency of the queen-mother, the corruption of the French court was as great, or perhaps still greater, than at any former period. Young females of distinction openly kept their lovers, and the principal ladies of the court changed their admirers as often as the most dissolute of the other sex changed their bedfellows. A very small portion of the excessive profligacy of the ladies and gentlemen of the court can be charged to the account of Anne of Austria. The seeds of corruption sown and cultivated by Francis I. and his successors, shot forth with fresh vigour after the death of Louis XIII. and his powerful minister.

Those who were most intimate with the queen-mother could at most but suspect her connexion with cardinal Mazarin.* Had she even actually married the cardinal, as it has since been asserted,† she was, however, faithful to her husband, and gave no occasion for scandal in the presence of her court. The cardinal preferred handsome boys to the most beautiful women. Anne of Austria did not conceal from her confidantes this Italian taste of Mazarin.‡ This circumstance would be a powerful argument in favour of the innocence of the queen-mother's connexion with the cardinal, did not de la Porte relate, that Anne of Austria purposely suppressed very strong evidence that Mazarin had even abused the young king Louis XIV.§ It can be ascribed to no other cause, but the secret consciousness of guilt, that Anne of Austria tolerated such licentiousness at her court, and

* See the opinion of Madame de Chevreuse, the only confidante of queen Anne of Austria, in the earlier part of her time, in the *Mém. de Card. de Retz*, II. p. 345, 6.

† *Anecdotes of the French Court*, from the letters of the duchess of Orleans, p. 36, &c.

‡ It is mentioned several times by Madame de Motteville.

§ *Mém. de M. de la Porte*, p. 215

even in the apartments of the maids of honour, as was practised before her eyes. Of her six *filles d'honneur* there was only one whose reputation was unimpeached.* All the others indulged themselves with several favourite lovers. One of these ladies, who had been five times a mother, at length became pregnant by the duke de Vitry,† who urged her to rescue her honour by destroying the fruit of her love. Mademoiselle de Guerchi, for that was the name of the lady, died under the operation, leaving the duke de Vitry quite inconsolable for her loss.

The spirit of rebellion which seized all ranks, ages, and sexes, at the period of the *Fronde*, diminished not only the respect for the laws of the realm, but also the regard for those of morality and decorum. It was the unanimous opinion of all that the duchess de Montbazon and the duchess de Longueville were the finest women of the French court, but the connoisseurs of beauty were not agreed, whether the prize ought to be adjudged to the former or to the latter. The duchess de Longueville, a sister of

* *Galant. des Rois de France*, III. p. 168.

† *Ibid.* p. 186.

the great Condé, was first attached to the duke de Beaufort,* whom she changed for the prince de Marsillac, afterwards duke de Rochefoucault,† and at length sacrificed the duke de Rochefoucault to the duke de Nemours.‡ The fair duchess atoned for the deviations of her youth, by the exemplary piety of her maturer years.§ With respect to the duchess de Montbazon, it would be vain to attempt to enumerate her lovers, whom she herself was unable to reckon up. She had the audacity to proclaim her real character; and among the depraved women of his time, cardinal de Retz never met with one who manifested in the practice of vice so little exterior respect for virtue as the duchess de Montbazon.‖ All the other females, who acted a conspicuous part at

* *Galant. des Rois de France,* III. p. 156.

† *Motteville,* I. p. 455, 6.

‡ *Ibid.* IV. p. 342.

§ *Ibid.* III. p. 547, 8.

‖ *Mém. du Card. de Retz.* I. p. 262. "Je n'ai jamais vû une personne, qui ait conservé dans le vice si peu de respect pour la vertu." The manner in which the duchess spoke concerning her professed lover the duke de Beaufort, to the cardinal, proves the justice of the opinion of the latter. "Elle disoit à qui la vouloit entendre, qu'il étoit impuissant; qu'il ne lui avoit jamais demandé le bout du doigt; qu'il n'étoit amoureux que de son ame," &c. II. p. 30.

the time of the *Fronde*, occupied the intermediate space between the duchesses de Longueville and de Montbazon. The duchess de Chatillon, * Madame la Palatine,† Madame de Guimenée,‡ Madame and Mademoiselle de Chevreuse,§ had all professed lovers, whom they frequently changed. Some of these ladies, especially Madame de Guimenée and Madame de Chevreuse, retained their passion for gallantry even in old age, after they were abandoned by all their charms, and loved without choice, merely from the necessity of loving. Madame de Chevreuse candidly acknowledged, that with the single exception of the duke of Buckingham, she had never loved any person whom she highly esteemed. This wanton allowed her daughter the same liberty which she had always assumed herself; and yet this public mistress of the cardinal de Retz was to have been married to the prince of Conti. The match being broken off, the cardinal

* *Motteville*, III. p. 360. *Rabutin Hist. Gaul.* I. p. 197.

† *De Retz*, I. p. 202. II. p. 226. For the adventures of this lady, see *Mémoires de Mad. de Montpensier.* I. p. 220.

‡ *Ibid.* I. p. 349.

§ *Ibid.* I. p. 201. III. p. 123.

thought it incumbent on him to procure satisfaction for his mistress.* Not long after he had performed this service, Mademoiselle de Chevreuse, from some unaccountable whim, left the cardinal de Retz, and threw herself into the arms of the abbé Fouquet.† The cardinal de Retz continued the favourite of the populace and clergy of Paris, though he maintained an illicit commerce with Madame de Guimenée and Madame de Pomereu, at the same time that he was living with Mademoiselle de Chevreuse.‡ The cardinal was, nevertheless, a saint, in comparison of most of his adherents, who, to use his own expression, were *cruelly* debauched; and by their frequent and shameless excesses, did great injury to him and his cause.§

The sixteenth century furnishes as many instances as the age of chivalry, of ladies labouring like men at the fortifica

* *De Retz*, II. p. 302, 303,

† *Ibid.* III. p. 123.

‡ *Mém. de Retz*, I. p. 849.

§ *Ibid.* "La societé de Messieurs de Brissac, de Vitry, de Malta, de Fontrailles, qui étoient demeurez en union avec moi, n'étoit pas une benefice sans charge. Ils étoient cruellement debauchez; et la licence publique leur donnant encore plus de liberté, ils s'emportoient tous les jours dans des excès qui alloient jusqu'au scandale."

tions of besieged towns, or even driving the enemy from their ramparts and walls. In Italy, the ladies of Pavia,* and in particular those of Sienna,† acquired great glory by their martial spirit and achievements. The women of Rochelle, of St. Riquier, Peronne, Sancerre and Vitré in France, gained equal reputation. The females of that time were not more courageous than those of the present age. Despair imparts strength and intrepidity to the coward and the weak. The women knew what treatment they had to expect of victorious besiegers; but this subject I shall reserve for a future opportunity.

The proofs of heroic courage and resolution given by some of the most distinguished ladies of France, during the times of the *Fronde*, were more characteristic than the instances of military valour alluded to above. Mademoiselle d'Orleans known by the name of Mademoiselle de Montpensier, went in the presence of the royal army to Orleans, opened herself a passage into the city, and by her resolution and eloquence prevailed on the wavering inhabitants to espouse the cause of

* *Dames Gal. de Brantome,* II. p. 297.

† *Ibid.* I. p. 338, 340. II. p. 299, 301.

the *Fronde*.* Soon afterwards she rescued the great Condé, who had been defeated by the marshal de Turenne, by hastening with the citizens of Paris to his aid, opening the gates of the city, and causing the guns of the Bastile to be fired upon the troops of the king.† Not less bold was the determination of Mademoiselle de Chevreuse, to turn the key upon the great Condé, the prince of Conti, and the dukes de Beaufort and de Nemours, who were assembled in the library of the duke of Orleans, and thus make them her prisoners‡. On the other hand a

* *De Retz*, III. p. 86. Her timid and irresolute father thought the attempt upon Orleans a ridiculous undertaking. "Enfin," says the cardinal, "tout ce ridicule reussit par la vigueur de Mademoiselle, qui fut effectivement très grande." She herself gives a very lively and interesting account of this affair in her *Mém.* I. p. 274, 277. II. p. 4, 9, 16, 18, 54; even though she wept like a woman for vexation. p. 37.

† *Ibid.* p. 146. *de la Porte*, p. 202, *Mém de Montpensier*, II. p. 72, 89. The last authority proves Madame de Motteville to be incorrect in asserting, that Mademoiselle would not acknowledge she had given orders to fire from the Bastile upon the royal army; but that the king, the queen-mother, and the public in general were convinced to the contrary. *Mém. de Motteville*, IV. p. 377.

‡ *De Retz*, II. p. 208. "Ils sont allez dans le cabinet de livres repondit Mademoiselle de Chevreuse attendre votre altesse royale; il n'y a qu'a donner un tour de clef pour les y enfermer, J'envie cet honneur au vicomte d'Autel; ce sera une belle chose, qu'une fille arrête un

freak of Madame de Guimenée was more remarkable for its singularity than its boldness. That lady promised the queen to put cardinal de Retz out of the way for a time, provided the queen would assure her, that the cardinal should remain in her custody alone. Madame de Guimenée intended to confine the cardinal in a green-house, not so much to remove him from the theatre of contending factions as to wean him from his connexion with Mademoiselle de Chevreuse.* The heroism of Mademoiselle d'Orleans and her contemporaries originated as naturally in the extravagant pitch of enthusiasm to which their minds were wound up, during the dangerous period of a general rebellion, as the unwomanly boldness of the females of that age in vice sprung from the universal licentiousness of the *Fronde*.

gagneur de battailles. Elle fit un saut, en disant cela, pour y aller."

* *Ibid.* II. p. 135.

CHAPTER V.

Of the Extinction of ancient Gallantry, and the Origin and Epochs of Modern Gallantry till the time of Louis XIV.

My readers have already been informed that the gallantry of the ages of chivalry was not the genuine and natural expression of love, attachment, and respect for the fair sex; but in general an empty, and consequently a ludicrous and exaggerated parade of words and exterior actions, by which the knights affected sentiments which they never felt. I may likewise take it for granted that they know, that the forms of courtesy by which the knights expressed to the ladies their affection, devotion, and respect, either in words, gestures, or actions, were determined with scarcely less precision than the rank and the behaviour of the higher classes towards each other, and that though they might exceed, yet they durst on no account violate these forms of courtesy.

Finally, I have shewn that the knights and ladies of ancient times seldom met except on great festivals and solemnities; and that the courtesy of the knights never exalted and deified the ladies more than at tournaments.

The constant residence of ladies, and not of ladies only, but likewise of the nobility and gentry of the other sex, at the courts of kings and princes could not fail to produce a great revolution both in ancient gallantry and in ancient etiquette. Formal and tedious compliments to princes and ladies presupposed the rare and ceremonious introduction of those by whom they were paid to both. It was therefore necessary, that they should either be abolished or abridged, when they began daily to see the one and to converse with the other. An important part of courtesy was confined to tournaments; and this could not but gradually decline when the combats of chivalry were superseded by other amusements. Another portion of the duties of the knights arose from the violence committed upon ladies, and which obliged each of them to hasten to the relief of the distressed fair. The improvements in the constitution of European states, and the increasing power of the

princes, put an end to these violences, but an artful system of seduction sprung up in their place. The knights of antiquity frequently devoted themselves to the service of ladies whom they had never seen, and whom they scarcely knew; and this service, so far from wounding the reputation of those ladies, tended on the contrary to exalt their character. By the assemblage of the two sexes at courts, the service of the ladies acquired a different form, and a different signification. The fortunate servants of love could no longer boast, as they had formerly done, of the pledges of affection they had received, without compromising the honour of the ladies.

The many and important changes, which took place during the sixteenth century in the relations between the two sexes at the European courts, could not instantaneously eradicate the former way of thinking, and the ancient customs to which it had given birth. Many of the rules of chivalrous courtesy were observed throughout the whole of the sixteenth, and some even during the latter half of the seventeenth century.

When the knights of antiquity devoted themselves to the service of any particular lady, they frequently made vows of diffi-

cult or dangerous execution, in order to evince the constancy and the ardor of their love. These vows were some of the first characteristics of the courtesy of the knights that expired with chivalry itself. I have not found during the sixteenth century any instance of a vow made in the spirit of the age of chivalry, except that of the duke de Nemours, who, out of love to his fair one*, wore no armor from the elbow to the hand, in full confidence that this uncovered part of the body would be sufficiently defended by the protection of his goddess. The duke de Nemours was in every respect as handsome and accomplished a knight as the ages of chivalry had ever produced†.

Another token of the courtesy of the knights consisted in their assuming or requesting the liberty of wearing the favours of the ladies to whose service they devoted themselves as the attendants of princes wore the liveries of their masters. This

* "Pour l'amour de sa mye." *Flearances, p.* 115.

† *Brantome Hommes Illust. III. p.* 2, 3. Il aymoit toutes sortes d'exercice, et si y estoit si universel, qu'il estoit parfait en tous ; . . . . qui l'a veu le peut baptizer partout le monde la fleur de toute chevalerie, et pour ce fort aymé de toute le monde, et principalement des dames, desquelles il en a tiré des faveurs et bonnes fortunes plus qu'il n'en vouloit," &c.

courtesy also was practised in the sixteenth century by the duke de Nemours. He paid a visit, in 1512, to the duchess of Ferrara, and brought back from this visit the colours of that lady which were black and grey.* Of the practice of wearing the livery of the ladies I find no subsequent traces whatever. In Brantome's time, many lovers requested the favour of their mistresses that they would wear new silk stockings, which they had purchased for themselves, eight or ten days, by way of consecrating them.† This consecration of men's stockings by ladies would appear to presuppose either different proportions of the legs of both sexes, or a different fabrication of silk stockings than what we are at present acquainted with.

A more general practice than the wearing of the colours of ladies was that of wearing tokens or pledges of love, which the knights begged of the ladies whom

* *Vie de Bayard*, ch. 47, p. 260. "Ce gentil duc de Nemours en rapporta les couleurs de la duchesse, qui estoient de gris et de noir."

† *Dames gal. I.* 325. "J'ay connu force gentils hommes, qui premier de porter leur bas desage, prioient premier leurs maistresses de les essayer, et porter devant eux quelques huit ou dix jours, de plus que du moins, et puis les portoient en une tres grande veneration et contentement d'esprit et de corps."

they loved or honoured, or which the ladies of their own accord presented to their lovers and admirers. The giving and wearing of these *faveurs*, as they were denominated, continued till the middle of the seventeenth century. The materials of which they were composed and their form were alone subject to continual variation. In the first campaigns which the valiant Bayard made in Italy, he met in the town of Carignan, with the lady who had been the object of his most ardent love and respect in his youth and during his residence at the court of Savoy.* The gallant soldier assured the lady of his heart, who was married to a gentleman named de Fluxas, of the continuance of his honourable attachment and veneration, and intreated her to procure him an opportunity of evincing his devotion to her and to the other ladies of the place. The lady expressed a wish that the knight would give a tournament. Bayard promised to gratify her, and at the same time requested the lady to give him one of her *manchons*. Madame de Fluxas complied; and the next day the knight announced that on the following Sunday he should hold a tourna-

* *Vie de Bayard*, ch. xiii. p. 61, 62.

ment, and offered as the prize of victory one of his lady's *manchons*, and a ruby worth one hundred ducats. On the appointed day the French and Italian knights tilted with universal applause. At the conclusion of the tournament, the umpires and the ladies adjudged the prize to Bayard. The chevalier declared, blushing, that he was not worthy of the honour, for if he had even behaved well, he had nobody to thank for it but Madame de Fluxas, who had lent him her *manchon ;* that he should therefore deliver the prize to her to be given to whomsoever she thought fit. The lady presented the ruby to the knight who had most signalized himself after Bayard, and kept the *manchon* in memory of the knight who had once been the object of her love, and of whom she took leave with tears at the opening of the campaign. The honourable attachment of the knight and lady continued till death, and not a year passed but what they sent each other mutual presents.*

* *Vie de Bayard,* p. 68. "Ce faict, convint aller prendre congé de ses premieres amours la dame de Fluxas, qui ne feut pas sans tomber larmes de la part d'elle, et de son costé estoit le cœur bien serré. L'amour honnête a duré entre eulx deux jusques à la mort, et n'estoit année qu'ils ne s'envoyassent presens l'un à l'autre."

Some years afterwards Bayard received a dangerous wound at the taking of Brescia, and was conveyed to the house of a wealthy nobleman, who had fled for refuge to a convent, and abandoned his wife and two daughters to their fate. The wounded knight was scarcely set down by those who carried him, when the lady and her daughters implored him to accept the house and all that it contained, as his just booty, but to protect her own honour and that of her children from the violence of the victorious soldiery. The chevalier Bayard pacified the ladies, and placed a guard before the house to keep off the troops engaged in plundering the place. The lady and her daughters neglected no means in their power that could accelerate the cure of the chevalier, or that could cause the time to pass agreeably. After his recovery, being about to depart, the lady of the house presented to the knight without fear and without reproach a casket containing two thousand five hundred ducats, as a small token of her gratitude. The knight, who always loved good people more than the best gold, at first positively refused the present. The lady appearing quite disconsolate at this refusal, he sent for her two daughters, gave each

of them one thousand ducats out of the sum, and the remaining five hundred to the nunneries of the city which had been plundered after the capture. When he was about to mount his horse, the two young ladies brought the chevalier two presents which they had worked for him, during his illness, with their own hands; they consisted of an elegant pair of bracelets and a silk purse. Bayard had the bracelets immediately put on, and thrust the purse into the cuffs of his sleeve, declaring that out of love and honour to the fair donors, he would wear both as long as they lasted*.

In the times of Henry III. Henry IV. and Louis XIII. the ladies generally presented their lovers with jewels which had a significant form, and by that form announced either the ardor and constancy of the attachment of the givers, or that of the love which they expected from their admirers. When queen Margaret of Navarre had chosen d'Entragues for her lover, she requested him to give her, as a proof of the sincerity of his affection, a diamond heart which he had received as a pledge of love

* *Vie de Bayard*, p. 291. "Et pour plus les honorer, se feit mectre les braceletz au bras, et la bourse se meit en sa manche," &c.

from Madame de Retz*. In the year 1633, Puylaurent, a favourite of the duke of Orleans, became enamoured of the princess de Chimay, and from that time he ceased to wear the *faveur* given him by the princess of Pfalzburg, consisting of a blue knot, through which went a little sword, with this motto : *Fidelité au bleu-mourant*†. During the reign of Louis XIII. the great value attached for ages to favours began to decrease.—The duke de Bellegarde, notwithstanding his age, had gained the good opinion of the young queen Anne of Austra by the gallantry which he had so long practised at the courts of Henry III. and Henry IV. This favour he suddenly forfeited, when, on his departure for Rochelle, he requested of the queen no other *faveur* than that she would touch the hilt of his sword with her hand‡. Anne of

* *Mémoires d'Aubigné*, p. 79.

† *Memoires du duc d'Orleans*, p. 112. "Et quittoit la marque de la chevalerie que madame la princesse de Phalsburg lui avoit donnée, un nœud bleu traversé d'une petite epée, avec la devise : Fidelite au bleu-mourant."

‡ *De Retz, I. p.* 345. "Que M. Bellegarde, vieux, mais poli et galant, à la mode de la cour de Henri III. lui avoit plû ; qu'elle s'en etoit degoutée, parcequ'en prenant congé d'elle lorsqu'il alla commander l'armée à la Rochelle, et lui ayant demandé en general la permission d'esperer d'elle une grace avant son depart, il s'etoit reduit à la supplier de vouloir bien mettre la main sur la garde de son

Austria thought this species of gallantry so silly, that she could never efface the unfavourable impression it had made. The taste for emblematic tokens of love gradually declined. The facility of obtaining greater favours produced an indifference to the smaller. The passion of the courtiers was not confined to high-sounding words; they were therefore more solicitous to conceal successful love, than to exhibit the tokens of it to public view.

In the ages of chivalry, the *faveurs* which the knights received from the mistresses of their hearts were frequently converted into *emprises*, or that part of their ornaments and accoutrements, which every one who wished to engage in combat with the owner or wearer of the *emprise* was obliged to touch*. The knight-errants, in particular, were distinguished by *emprises*, which they had received from their ladies as pledges of love. Of this kind of knight-errants I find but one single instance in France in the first years of the sixteenth century. In 1505, Antoine d'Arces, and three of his compa-

epée; qu'elle avoit trouvé cette maniere si sotte, qu'elle n'en avoit jamais pû revenir."

* *Olivier de la Marche*, I. ch. 14.

nions in arms, requested and obtained permission of queen Anne of Bretagne to traverse the four kingdoms of England, Scotland, Spain, and Portugal, challenging wherever they went the knights of irreproachable reputation, in order to increase their own fame, and to support the honour of their ladies.* The four knights announced their design in a manifesto or proclamation, in which they likewise fixed the conditions of the combat, the rewards of the victor, and the terms that would be imposed upon the vanquished. The chevalier d'Arces wore a white *emprise* about his neck, and therefore assumed the appellation of the white knight. Whoever touched this *emprise* was expected immediately to declare whether he intended to fight merely for his own glory, or for the honour of his lady. In the latter case, the vanquished was to present himself as a prisoner to the lady of the conqueror; or, if he had not inclination or leisure to appear in person before the lady, he might redeem himself with a diamond worth three hundred crowns which was to be

* *Supplément à l'histoire du chevalier Bayard*, p. 443, 447.

delivered to the victor within four days.*

Though knight-errantry expired in the commencement of the sixteenth century, yet its causes and effects survived it more than one hundred years. The relics and imitations of knight-errantry were infinitely more pernicious than its operation had ever been, during the period in which it was the most flourishing.

Many knight-errants went in quest of adventures, either because they were commanded by their ladies to make themselves worthy of their favour by heroic achievements, or because they conceived that they ought, without any express injunction, to merit the love of the fair by dangerous conflicts undertaken for their glory. Other knight-errants roved through countries far and near, in order to relieve oppressed females, and to avenge on the offenders the injuries they had sustained.

* *Supplément à l'histoire du chevalier Bayard*, p. 443, 447. "Et s'il advient que celuy aura touché à la dite emprinse ait declaré les accomplir pour sa dame, soit mis outre et rendu, sera tenu s'en aller rendre prisonnier, et à la mercy de la mieux aymée dame de celuy à qui le cas ne sera advenu. Et au cas qu'il ne voulust aller en personne au lieu où sera ladite dame, sera racheptable d'un diamant de trois cens escus, lequel diamant sera baillé dedans quatre jours."

Violence ceased to be committed upon the persons and property of ladies, or it was no longer punished by individual knights, but by special tribunals. The ladies, however, still looked up to their lovers and their friends to defend their honour; and hence the nobility of the 16th and 17th century thought and acted in the above-mentioned points, as the knight-errants of more remote periods had done.

The glory of the ladies throughout the whole of the sixteenth century, at least in France, Spain, and Italy, was perhaps a still more powerful spur to heroic deeds than the thirst of personal fame, or the love of the country or the prince. To this conviction was owing the contempt of Francis I. for all those gentlemen who had no mistresses; and also the wish, that all his officers and courtiers were inflamed with an ardent passion for some fair female. Throughout the whole of the sixteenth century, the most valiant warriors acknowledged, that in all dangers and conflicts, they were much more strengthened and animated by the desire of pleasing their ladies than by any other impulse.* Many gallant men ventured, or

* For instance, the brave Bussy, during the reign of Henry III. *Brantome Dames Gal.* II. p. 21, 74, 75.

even sacrificed their lives in battle, to prove to their ladies, that they had not found unworthy admirers in them.*

If the desire of pleasing the ladies had been productive of no other effects than to animate the courage of warriors in battle, it would have called for the highest commendation as a sister of the love of country.

This desire was unfortunately diverted from its proper track by false notions of honour; and it transformed the most amiable females either into dangerous fools, or into furies, who waved the torch of discord among friends, relatives, and companions in arms, and converted the bravest of men into insensate desperadoes, or into murderers and assassins, who bestrewed the soil of their native land with the

"I have often heard him say, that in time of war, both in general engagements and single combats, of which he has fought a great number, he was less animated by the service of his prince, and by ambition, than by the only hope of pleasing his lady." So also Henry IV. who, in 1587, laid the colours he had won at the feet of the countess de Guiche. *Sully*, I. p. 128.

* For example, the valiant de Bordes, at the battle of Dreux, *Dames Gal.* II. p. 274, "At parting, he said, I will go and fight bravely for the love of my mistress, or die gloriously. And he was as good as his word, for having penetrated the six first ranks, he fell at the seventh, and expired."

corpses of her most magnanimous sons, and embrued their hands in the blood of their friends, or at least of their fellow-citizens.

Vain or enthusiastic females of the sixteenth century imposed upon their admirers tasks as unreasonable and dangerous as in the ages of chivalry. A lady at the court of Francis I. had heard much concerning the courage of a Monsieur de Lorges, who was a suitor for her favour. In order to ascertain whether report had not perhaps exaggerated his intrepidity, she one day, when Francis I. was giving a lion-baiting, dropped her glove into the cage containing the animals, just at the moment when they were most exasperated. She then went to M. de Lorges, and requested him to recover her glove, if he loved her with such ardour as he pretended. The brave man covered his left hand with the cap which it was then customary to wear, and holding his drawn sword in his right, advanced into the midst of the furious lions, who, fortunately, did not attempt to prevent him from picking up the lady's glove. De Lorges indignantly threw the glove in the face of the silly woman who had so wantonly exposed his life, or at least renounced a mistress,

whose vanity exacted proofs of courage attended with so much danger, and so little fame.*

During the reign of Henry III. a Monsieur de Genlis was put to a trial of the same kind as M. de Lorges.† In an excursion one day upon the Seine with his mistress, she purposely threw a valuable handkerchief into the river, and then begged her lover to leap into the water to recover it for her. Monsieur de Genlis excused himself, saying, that he could not swim. This hesitation produced the reproachful reflection that he was a cowardly lover.‡ On these words he sprung, without farther ceremony, into the Seine, and would infallibly have been drowned, had not a boat that was near at hand hastened to his assistance.

Requisitions of this kind, however, were as rare as the single combats fought without any affront having been given by either party, for the love of their ladies, or of the sex in general.§ Infinitely more

* *Brantome Dames Gal.* II. p. 265.

† *Ibid.* p. 267.

‡ "Que c'estoit un couard amy et nullement hardy."

§ At the siege of Paris, a champion of the anti-royal party challenged any of the king's army to a *coup de pis-*

destructive were the frequent duels which took place in the sixteenth, and at the commencement of the seventeenth century, not only on account of affronts offered to the honour of gentlemen, but also for the honour of their fair mistresses.

From the period when the introduction of fire-arms began to render the heavy armour and the weapons of antiquity more and more useless and uncommon, (and this epoch may be placed at the commencement of the sixteenth century) the ancient combats were superseded by the duels of modern times, in which men fought at first partly clothed in armour, and afterwards without any defence for the body, in general with swords, and more rarely with pistols. Lighter weapons and armour were soon productive of this melancholy consequence, that duels became beyond comparison more common and more dangerous than they had been

tolet pour l'amour des dames, and the duke de Bellegarde accepted this challenge. *Mém. particul.* I. p. 74. Lord Cherbury challenged the celebrated French duellist, Monsieur de Balagny, in order to prove that he had a more amiable mistress than Balagny. The latter had no inclination to fight a duel on that account, and proposed a test of love to the chivalrous Cherbury, concerning which his lordship expresses himself in these terms: "He spoke more like a paillard than a cavalier." *Life of Lord Herbert, of Cherbury*, p. 80.

in preceding ages. The heavy armour of the age of chivalry covered the body so completely, that any one might fight some hundreds of persons with sharp weapons, without receiving a single wound of any consequence. Modern duels, on the contrary, commonly cost one, and frequently both, of the combatants their lives, because their bodies were protected only by their skill. The ancient combats of chivalry required much equipment, and were accompanied with many solemn ceremonies, and during these preparations many quarrels were adjusted, or the minds of the antagonists were at least soothed; but when nothing more was necessary for a single combat than a light sword, which gentlemen and officers constantly wore, a duel might be fought almost at any time, and in any place. Though seconds were chosen in the sixteenth, and at the beginning of the seventeenth century, they paid no attention whether the combat was conducted by the parties with propriety, but took a share in it themselves, and fought as though they had mutually offended each other. Hence it frequently happened, that out of six, eight, or more combatants, very few, or perhaps none, escaped being mortally, or at least dan-

gerously wounded. With the number and danger of duels rose also the estimation in which they were held. During the reign of Henry III. and still more of Henry IV. no officer or gentleman possessed any reputation, unless he had behaved well in one or more duels; and a prize-fighter, who had been fortunate enough to dispatch a great number of antagonists in duels, was held in higher esteem, especially by the women, than the greatest general. Lord Cherbury observes, that at the time he visited the court of Henry IV. the inclination of the French to duelling was so great, that scarcely any man was thought worth the looking on, who had not killed some other in duel. Mennon, the chief of the pages to the constable de Montmorency, desiring to marry a niece of monsieur de Disancour, who, it was thought, should be his heir, was thus answered by him: "Friend, it is not time yet to marry: I will tell you what you must do; if you will be a brave man, you must first kill in single combat two or three men, then afterwards marry, and engender two or three children, or the world will neither have got or lost by you."* At a ball given by queen Mar-

* *Life of Lord Cherbury*, p. 63, 64.

garet of Navarre, "one knocked at the door," says lord Cherbury, "somewhat louder than became, as I thought, a civil person. When he came in, I remember there was a sudden whisper among the ladies, saying, 'C'est *monsieur Balagny*.' Whereupon also, I saw the ladies and gentlemen, one after another, invite him to sit near them; and, which is more, when one lady had his company awhile, another would say: 'You have enjoyed him long enough, I must have him now.' At which bold civility of theirs, though I were astonished; yet it added unto my wonder, that his person could not be thought at most but ordinary handsome; his hair, which was cut very short, half grey; his doublet, but of sackcloth, cut to his shirt; and his breeches only of plain grey cloth. Informing myself by some bystanders who he was, I was told, that he was one of the gallantest men in the world, as having killed eight or nine men in single fight, and that for this reason the ladies made so much of him, it being the manner of all Frenchwomen to cherish gallant men, as thinking they could not make so much of any else with the safety of their honour."*

* *Life of Lord Cherbury*, p. 70.

Such being the notions entertained with respect to courage and honour, it could not be otherwise than that men should seek by duels to acquire reputation, and the esteem of the fair sex; and that many ladies should avail themselves of this propensity to duelling, to be revenged of persons from whom they imagined they had received some offence. Most duels were fought, if not by the instigation, at least on account of females; and we may safely assume, that, out of the four thousand gentlemen slain in duels during the reign of Henry IV. alone,* the majority fell victims to the passions of women. Till the last years of Henry IV. the notion was kept up, that every soldier and gentleman, and more especially every member of an order of knighthood, was bound, at the first beck of a woman, to hasten with hand and sword to take her part. This notion was instilled into females from their earliest infancy, and even children claimed the privilege of their sex. Lord Cherbury once walked out with a grand-daughter of the constable de Montmorency, a child about ten or eleven years of age, attended by

* *Sully*, III. p. 81, note.

several French gentlemen and ladies. "This young lady," says his lordship, "wearing a knot of ribband on her head, a French chevalier suddenly took it, and fastened it to his hat-band. The young lady, offended herewith, demands her ribband, but he refusing to restore it, the young lady, addressing herself to me, said: 'Monsieur, I pray get my ribband from that gentleman.' Hereupon, going towards him, I courteously, with my hat in my hand, desired him to do me the honour that I might deliver the lady her ribband or bouquet again. But he roughly answering me: 'Do you think I will give it you, when I have refused it to her?' I replied: 'Nay then, Sir, I will make you restore it by force.' Whereupon also, putting on my hat, and reaching at his, he, to save himself, ran away; and, after a long course in the meadow, finding that I had almost overtaken him, he turned short, and running to the young lady, was about to put the ribband on her hand, when I, seizing upon his arm, said to the young lady, 'It was I that gave it.' 'Pardon me,' quoth she, 'it is he that gives it me.' I said then: 'Madam, I will not contradict you, but if he dare say that I did not constrain him to give it, I

will fight with him.' The French gentleman answered nothing thereunto for the present, and so conducted the young lady again to the castle." The next day lord Cherbury actually sent the gentleman a challenge; but he had no inclination to accept it. He concludes his narrative of the affair with this observation: "I proceeded in that manner, because I thought myself obliged thereto by the oath taken when I was made Knight of the Bath."*

One of the most sacred duties of knights, and of the first rules of courtesy, was, to say nothing to the disadvantage of the ladies, but, on the contrary, every thing that was good and commendable. Louis XII. Francis I. and Henry II. strictly adhered to this duty of chivalry. In the pantomimic representations of persons of all ranks, Louis XII. suffered the performers to say any thing they pleased, even of the courtiers themselves, but he enjoined them to refrain from any animadversions on the queen and the ladies of her court.† Francis I. did not entertain a favourable opinion of female virtue; and, in the circle of his confidants, was

* *Life of Lord Cherbury*, p. 59, 60.

† *Brantome Dames Gal.* II. p. 352.

highly diverted with all the ludicrous or scandalous stories related of women. He nevertheless strictly prohibited reflections being cast in public at court upon the sex. When a cavalier, during Lent, once carried the remains of the meat dishes from the royal table to the *dames de la petite bande*, and on this occasion indulged in an indecent joke on the partiality of the ladies for flesh, raw or dressed,* the king was so exasperated, and cursed and stormed so furiously, as he had never been seen or heard to do before. The offender escaped, fortunately for himself, as the king would otherwise infallibly have ordered him to be hanged. On this occasion, he declared aloud, that he would cause that punishment to be inflicted, without mercy, on every one who should dare to asperse the honour of the sex.†

Henry II. and his consort adhered to the principles of Francis I.‡ and Charles

* *Brantome Dames Gal.* p. 355. "Que ces dames ne se contentoient pas de manger de la chair crue en caresme, mais en mangeoient de la cuite, et tout leur saoul."

† *Ibid.* "Le roy avoit alors dit tout haut que quiconque toucheroit à l'honneur des dames, sans remission il seroit pendu."

‡ *Ibid.* p. 365.

IX. in his youth manifested, according to the ancient practice of chivalry, very great respect for the sex.* During his reign, however, detraction, pasquinades, and satires on the ladies began to be common,† and increased under Henry III. to an incredible degree, because that monarch and his minions took the greatest delight in exposing the faults and foibles of the women, and in blasting their reputation, as far as lay in their power.‡ The ladies of the times of Charles IX. and Henry II. furnished, it is true, such abundant subjects for satire and scandal, that it could not but be extremely difficult to keep both the tongue and the pen within bounds. Henry IV. was himself too fond of the merry joke and keen satire, to deprive his courtiers of the same indulgence. In the seventeenth century, the ladies were spared as little as the other sex, and people seemed to be totally ignorant that a few generations before, the honour and

* *Brantome Dames Gal.* II. p. 375.

† *Ibid.* p. 376, 379, 398, 399.

‡ *Ibid.* and *Journal de Henri III.* II. p. 281. "Il se divertissoit encore de la licence qu'il donnoit à ses mignons d'attenter à l'honneur des dames, et souffroit que leur indiscretion malicieuse, où leur envie contre leur vertu, les exposassent chastes ou non chastes, au même peril de leur reputation."

the reputation of the sex had been regarded as inviolable.

With so much of the courtesy of the age of chivalry as was retained in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the language, and in particular the behaviour of the imitators of the ancient knights, coincided as little as the words and actions of the knights themselves had done. I shall notice the most striking instances of disrespect to the sex, during the abovementioned period, that my female readers may be more fully convinced, that, in the times when the greatest parade in words, an abject humility in gestures, and inclinations of the body, were denominated courtesy, no real regard was entertained for the sex; and that a cultivated heart and understanding are requisite, in order duly to appreciate female excellencies, and to bear with female frailties, in the way most conducive to the real happiness of both sexes.

Louis XII. had the reputation of being one of the most gallant knights of his time; and this gallant monarch was, to use the mildest term, extremely blunt even in his courtesies, and guilty of excessive rudeness in his repartees to the ladies. He had known Margaret, after-

wards regent of the Netherlands, while a child at the French court, before she was sent back to her parents. In allusion to this acquaintance, he observed to Andreas de Burgo, the ambassador from the regent to his court, that he would rather kiss his fair vassal than her representative, and that when he should next see his good cousin, he would remind her how he had formerly slapped her on that part of the body where children are commonly chastised.* We are not informed how Margaret of Austria took this compliment. The regent of France, Anne de Beaujeu, was mortally offended by a reply made in the heat of passion by Louis XII. while duke of Orleans. Louis was one day playing at tennis with other gentlemen, and the regent and her ladies were spectators of the game. In the midst of it, a dispute arose between the duke d'Orleans and some of his companions respecting a stroke that had been given. The affair was referred to the ladies, and the regent decided against the duke. This so irri

* *Lettres de Louis XII.* and *du Card d'Amboise,* II. p. 257. I. p. 149. Andreas de Burgo once wrote to his mistress: "I have thought it my duty to inform you of every thing, and the devil take those who are engaged in so bad an office." III. p. 95.

tated the prince, that he exclaimed; "If a man has pronounced the decision, he is a liar; and if a woman, she is a whore.* The duke was severely punished for this indecency; the regent persecuted him with such inveteracy, that he was under the necessity of leaving, not only Paris, but the whole kingdom of France, and seeking refuge in Bretagne.

Francis I. was quite as solicitous as his predecessor that due respect should be paid to the sex. Notwithstanding these sentiments of the king, the cardinal de Lorraine treated a sovereign princess with greater rudeness than Louis XII. himself had done. The cardinal, passing through Piedmont, on his way to Rome, paid a visit to the duke and duchess of Savoy. When he was presented to the duchess, who was by birth a princess of Portugal, she offered him her hand to kiss, after the manner of the Spanish and Portuguese court. The cardinal left the hand of the princess untouched, and made a motion to kiss the lips of the duchess. The duchess drew back, and the cardinal followed her. Weary at length of this squeamishness, the cardinal caught the

* *Brantome Dames illust.* p. 291.

head of the princess, and kissed her twice or three times, in spite of her shrieks. "What!" exclaimed he, "can any one make so many ceremonies with me? I kiss the queen, my mistress, who is the greatest queen on earth; and must I not kiss you, who are but a little dirty duchess? I would have you know, that I have slept with ladies as beautiful, and of as high, or still more exalted birth than you."*

During the whole of the sixteenth century, it was the custom of war to massacre or to plunder the inhabitants of towns taken by storm, and to violate their wives and daughters. On the taking of Brescia, nothing but the presence of the chevalier Bayard protected his hostess and her fair daughters from pillage and dishonour.† After the storming of Rome, the licentious soldiery, despising the most beautiful courtezans, resolved to gratify their ap-

* *Brantome Dames illust.* p. 364. "Comment, dit il, est ce a moy à qui il faut user de cette mine et façon? Je bayse bien la reyne, ma maitresse, qui est la plus grande reyne du monde, et vous, je ne vous baiserois pas, qui n'estes qu'une petite duchesse crottée? Et si veux que vous sçachiez, que j'ay couché avec des dames aussi belles, et d'aussi ou plus grande maison que vous. Possible pouvoit-il dire vray."

† *Vie de Bayard.*

petites with the females of the highest rank, whom they frequently violated in the presence of their husbands and fathers; and the females thus abused were afterwards denominated the relics of the pillage of Rome.* In 1590, the prince of Parma took Corbeil by storm, and permitted the soldiers to plunder the town, and to ravish all the females, which violence very few escaped.† So ungovernable was the licentiousness of the military, and even officers of rank, that a commander so strict and so attentive as the marshal de Vielleville, could not prevent the officers of the garrison of Metz from carrying off by force beautiful nuns, or the handsome wives and daughters of the inhabitants, and confining them in private places, as victims of their guilty passions.‡ Of what avail then was the homage paid to certain individuals for the purpose of debauching them, when the whole sex was treated in a way that would have disgraced the rudest barbarians?

During the reign of Francis I. an in-

* "*Les reliques du sac du Rome.*" *Brantome Œuvres*, IV. p. 268.

† *Journal de Henri IV.* Vol. I. p. 95.

‡ *Carloix.*

stance occurred of a lady and gentleman of distinction commencing their acquaintance with the greatest courtesy towards each other, and breaking it off with a mutual indelicacy, which renders it doubtful whether the lady was surpassed by the cavalier or the cavalier by the lady. In 1538, died the marshal de Monte-Jan, the French commander in chief in Piedmont, leaving a young, handsome, and very rich widow without children.* As soon as decency permitted, many gentlemen courted the hand of the opulent and accomplished widow. Among these suitors was the marquis de Saluces, to whose proposals the lady lent a favourable ear, because she thereby obtained an opportunity of returning in safety to France, whither the marquis was returning by command of the king. The marquis and the rich widow actually travelled together to that country. On the way, the marquis every where conducted himself as though he had been betrothed to his fair companion. At Lyons, in particular, he purchased many things, that he might make his entry into Paris with so much the greater pomp. When

* *Carloix*, I. p. 94, &c.

the travellers had reached the suburb of St. Marceau, the lady directed her servants to drive with her baggage a different way from what the marquis was going. When the marquis enquired the reason of this, the fair widow replied, that honour forbade her to live in the same house with him. "This separation," continued she, "is only that of the body, for I leave with you my heart, of which I request you to take good care."* These words pacified the marquis so much the more, as the lady gave him a kiss at parting. In a few days, the marquis observed that he had a dangerous rival in the prince de Roche-sur-yon. The delays and excuses of the lady at length led him to the determination to cite her before the parliament, and to insist on the fulfilment of the promise of marriage which she had given him. The lady appeared, and declared that, to prevent all dispute, she solemnly protested to God and the king, that she had never given the marquis de Saluces any promise of marriage, neither had she ever any thoughts of doing so; that if

* *Carloix*, I. p. 104. "Cette departie n'est que de corps seulement; car je vous laisse mon cœur, duquel il vous plaira faire bonne garde."

any one would impeach the veracity of this asseveration, she had with her a knight, M. de Vielleville, who, she hoped, with the aid of the Almighty, would punish the temerity of any such opponent. The president of the parliament asked the marquis what he had to say to this declaration of the lady. "It is not my wish," replied the marquis, "to obtain a wife by force. If she will not have me, neither will I have her."

Henry II. was as incapable of curbing his courtiers as was the marshal de Vielleville during his reign of restraining the licentiousness of the officers at Metz. A Monsieur de Mathas had the rudeness to tell one of the queen's maids of honour to her face that she was a *jument et grande coursiere bordable.** No punishment was inflicted for this insult, the author of which was only obliged to stay away a few days from court.

The most beautiful, or at least one of the most beautiful of the females at the court of Henry II. was the duchess de Guise. This lady was riding one summer's day, with a female attendant, a page, and two servants, from Paris to St.

*. *Brantome Dames Gal.* II. p. 366.

Germain, where the court then resided. Notwithstanding the intense heat, she made all possible haste, that she might arrive in time for her husband's dinner, which persons of the highest distinction took very early in the sixteenth century. By the way she met with a captain in the army, who was returning from Italy, and knew neither the duchess nor her livery. The soldier first began to rally the princess for riding so fast in such hot weather. By degrees he grew bolder and more familiar, and at length made very significant gestures, as though he would have tickled the beautiful leg of the lady, which appeared particularly charming. The duchess permitted the officer to proceed unmolested in his jokes and gestures, and politely took leave of him before the Hotel de Guise. The captain was now terrified at the liberties which he had taken with a lady of such distinction. The duchess freely forgave what had passed, and this forgiveness alone proves that the fault of the soldier was a very venial and common offence.*

During the reign of Henry III. the abuse of the sex, both in word and deed,

* *Brantome Hommes illust.* I. p. 110, 111.

was sanctioned by the example of the king. Henry took delight in causing the ladies of the court to be ravished by his attendants, and common women by his guards.* A prince of his house, or at least of his court, made a silver goblet the principal ornament of his sideboard. On this goblet, not only the notorious figures of Aretin, but likewise the different modes of copulation of every species of animals were engraven with great art.† Whenever the prince invited the ladies of the court, and this he very often did, this goblet, and no other, was produced; for he gave the strictest orders to his domestics to serve none of the ladies with wine except in that favourite goblet. Some of the ladies, says Brantome, "were quite embarrassed and put out of countenance at the sight of the figures on the cup. Some declared that they would never drink out of it again; others simpered or laughed aloud, affirming that the wine tasted as well out of that goblet as out of any other. The prince presently asked the ladies why they shut their eyes while they drank; whether the wine, or the

* *Galanteries des Rois de France*, II. p. 182.

† *Brantome Dames Gal.* I. p. 44, &c.

sight of the figures, gave them most pleasure, or which of the figures they should prefer in practice to the rest. He was most delighted with the confusion or the astonishment of young and innocent females who had recently come to the court.* None of the ladies executed a threat, which was frequently repeated, that they would never come again. Many soon became accustomed to the goblet, and imitated the actions which they had seen represented upon it."†

Not less scandalous than this goblet was a practice adopted in the civil wars by a duke de Montpensier, and publicly related at table by another French prince.‡ The duke de Montpensier bore such an antipathy to the Huguenots, that he caused all the men who fell into his hands to be instantly put to death, and all the women to be ravished. When the latter

* *Brantome Dames Gal.* I. p. 46. "Mais surtout à mon gré, le plus beau et le meilleur estoit à contempler ces filles innocentes, ou qui feignoient l'être, et autres dames nouvellement venues à tenir leur mine froide, riantes du bout du nez ou des levres, ou à se contraindre à faire des hypocrites," &c.

† "Enfin elles s'y accoustumerent si bien, qu'elles ne firent plus de scrupule d'y boire; aucunes s'en desbaucherent pour en faire l'essay, car toute personne d'esprit veut essayer tout."

‡ *Brantome Hommes illust.* III. p. 281, 282.

were handsome, he sent them to one of his officers, whom nature had equipped with extraordinary liberality for the conflict of love, with these words: *Je vous recommande a Monsieur Mon Guidon—Qu'on la luy mêne.* The duke de Guise gave a circumstantial account of this mode of treating the Huguenots in the presence of his wife and many other ladies of the court. The latter laughed as heartily at the story as the men, and the expression, *Je vous recommande au Guidon de Monsieur de Montpensier*, became a standing jest with the ladies and gentlemen of the court.*

Though the ladies did not recover under Henry IV. the lost right of inviolability, yet his reign, as I shall presently shew, was regarded as the æra of refined gallantry in France. Nevertheless, during this period of refined gallantry, it was a general practice for gentlemen, who had abandoned their former mistresses, and

* *Brantome Hommes illust.* III. p. 282. "Et ce ne fut sans bien rire et homme et femme; et si ce mot se dit un long-temps à la cour parmy les dames et galans de la cour, qui leur disoient; Je vous recommande au Guidon de Monsieur de Montpensier, dont aucunes, qui en savoient le *tu autem*, disoient ou par timidité ou par hypocrisie; ah! Dieu nous en garde. D'autres disoient, il nous feroient que la raison."

were desirous of recommending themselves to others, to sacrifice to the latter all the love-letters received from the former.* The duke de Bellegarde was considered as one of the most perfect patterns of gallantry at the court of Henry IV.; who then can read without astonishment the following instance of his courtesy, shewn to the reigning queen of France? Mary de Medicis was walking one day with her ladies in the Tuilleries, when a quantity of small shot suddenly fell upon the queen and her attendants. It was soon found that the king himself had been shooting in the gardens, and a person was sent to inform him of the presence of his consort. Among the courtiers who hastened to dispel the fears of the queen, or to inquire how she did, was the duke de Bellegarde. The queen continued her walk, on which the duke stole behind her, and letting fall gently some comfits he had in his pocket upon the queen's hair, gave her occasion to apprehend that some shot had fallen on her again. Lord Cherbury, turning to the unseasonable jester, observed, that he marvelled that so old a courtier as he could

* *Sully*, III. p. 74. "Il est du bel usage, en pareille occasion de faire à la dame qu'on aime le sacrifice des lettres de celle qu'on n'aime plus."

find no means to entertain ladies but by making them afraid.*

During the turbulent regency of Anne of Austria, it was the fashion to treat the sex with coldness and contempt. Perhaps, therefore, the conduct of the marshal D'Hocquincourt to the duchess de Chatillon may appear less extraordinary than it would have done in other times.

The marshal had been tenderly attached to the duchess, till he at length perceived that she had commenced a new intrigue with the abbé Fouquet. After this discovery, the marshal kept no terms with his inconstant mistress, publicly proclaiming in all companies the proofs of her infidelity, and whatever he knew besides to her disadvantage. The duchess thought she should impose silence on the marshal, and at the same time justify herself, if she challenged the slanderer, and called him to account in the presence of others. For this purpose she chose the house of the marquis de Sourches, on whose good opinion she set a particular value. The marshal, aware of her intention, threw her, by the following familiar and uncourteous address, into a confusion, from which she

* *Life of Lord Cherbury*, p. 147, 148.

could not recover. *Dieu le garde,* said he, *ma pauvre enfant. Comment se portent tes petites fesses? Sont elles toujours bien maigres?* * The duchess had so much command over herself as not to change colour, but was unable to utter a single word. The marquis de Sourches observed, that a brave man ought never to make a direct attack on the ladies,† which produced a vindication on the part of the marshal, containing many severe reflections on the stupidity of women, who aggravated infidelity to their lovers by mockery and slander. He concluded with expressing his astonishment, that Madame de Chatillon had modesty enough to listen to all that he had said with the patient consciousness of guilt. The duchess was still silent, and the marshal, at his departure, left her more dead than alive.

The reign of Henry IV. was regarded for at least half a century after his death, especially by the ladies, as the golden age of refined gallantry. "The duke de Bellegarde," says Madame de Motteville, "was already an old man at the period

* *Hist. amour. des Gaules,* I. p. 197.

† "Les braves hommes ne doivent jamais rompre en visière aux dames."

of the arrival of Anne of Austria, but he was one of those to whom the queen was attached. Bellegarde had been the favourite of two kings. He still stood so high in the public opinion, that the queen did not refuse an incense from him that was incapable of injuring her virtue. She allowed him to conduct himself towards her as he had done to the ladies of of his own times, which were the reign of gallantry and of the sex."*

"Towards the end of the year 1646," as Madame de Motteville informs us, in another place, "died the celebrated Bassompierre, who, in the preceding century had gained so great a reputation for gallantry.† This courtier, to whom Henry IV. was so strongly attached, whom Mary de Medicis had so highly esteemed, and whom the whole court had so much admired in his youth, was not regretted in our times. He was polite, courteous, and liberal, but the young people could not endure him. They said that he was not in the fashion, that he was too fond of relating trivial stories, and that himself and

* *Mém.* I. p. 15, 16. "Et souffrit qu'il en usa avec elle à la mode du siècle, où il avoit vécu, qui avoit été le regne de la galanterie et celui des dames."

† *Ibid.* p. 395, 397.

his best days were his constant topics. I have even known some who were so unjust, as to turn him into ridicule for offering to treat them when he himself had nothing to eat. Besides the other faults which they found in him, and some of which I must certainly admit, they represented it as a heinous offence, that he was solicitous to please, that he was fond of expence, and that he continued to live according to the principles of a court, in which courtesy and respect for the ladies had prevailed. In truth, the relics of the marshal de Bassompierre were worth more than the youth of many, who passed for the most polished men of the age."*

If Madame de Motteville's estimate of other characters had not been more correct than her sentiments respecting that of the marshal de Bassompierre, her opinions would be of very little value. From the facts which I have introduced concerning this man and the court of Henry IV. in general, the reader will be enabled to form a more accurate judgment of the

* "Qu'etant d'une cour, ou la civilité et le respect etoient en regne pour les dames, il continuoit à vivre dans les mêmes maximes.---Les restes du marechal de Bassompierre valoient mieux, que la jeunesse de quelques-uns de plus polis de ce tems-là."

nature of the gallantry of the age of Henry IV. than Madame de Motteville. Wherein consisted the vaunted gallantry of the reign of that monarch? Was it displayed in a serious and uniform endeavour to give females of beauty, talents, and virtue, disinterested proofs of love, attachment, and respect; in a tenderness for their reputation, and a promptitude to defend it; or in a strenuous solicitude to promote their real welfare by every possible expedient? By no means; the gallantry of the age of Henry IV. consisted, on the contrary, in the art of debauching the innocence of virgins, and the virtue of married women; in corrupting the understanding and the hearts of both; and, after robbing them of their innocence and virtue, in depriving them also of their honour or reputation. The intrinsic odiousness of these arts of seduction was not diminished because the seducers were superbly and elegantly dressed; because they amused the females whom they had debauched, or designed to debauch, with flatteries or merry stories; because they watched every opportunity of rendering the ladies little services, which ought to have been performed by their domestics; because, in order to gratify them, they gave splendid entertainments

at the expence of others; because they devoted to the sex all their time and strength, which ought to have been usefully employed in the service of their country. How was it possible that even sensible women could regard that age as the period of the reign of their sex, and of genuine gallantry, in which, though much indeed was done for them, they were treated in such a manner as under Henry IV? The way in which the great masters of gallantry at the court of Henry IV. entertained the ladies, and spoke of themselves, appeared to the youth of the succeeding reign as ridiculous as the antiquated fashion of their dress.

Louis XIII. possessed neither the qualifications for pleasing the women, nor the inclination to serve and amuse them as his father and his courtiers had done.* In

* Whenever he happened to converse with the ladies, it was remarked as something extraordinary. "Je saluay le roy parmi les dames, galand et amoureux, contre sa coustume." *Bassomp.* II. p. 605. During the period of the king's attachment to the fair Hautefort, he gave concerts in the queen's apartments thrice a week. Most of the airs that were sung, and sometimes the words also, were composed by the king. Louis XIII. was now and then so gallant, that, at collations, which he gave in the country, he would not sit down to table, but chose himself to wait upon the ladies. *Mém. de Mademois. de Montpensier*, I. p. 31. We are assured by the duke de St.

both respects he was resembled by the cardinal Richelieu,* and his successor, cardinal Mazarin.† The example of the king and his great minister, in a short time, changed the tone of the major part of the court; and this new tone was encouraged by cardinal Mazarin. The gallantry of the last reign disappeared, and it became the fashion not only to neglect the ladies, but also to treat them with rudeness.‡ Even the great Condé, who had been so enthusiastic a votary of the sex, and of refined gallantry, after the glorious victories he gained over the Spaniards, professed himself an enemy to both;§ and he was imitated by the whole host of his adherents, who received the appellation of *petits maitres*, because, elated with the

Simon, that the king's affection for the fair Hautefort, was a purely virtuous and Platonic passion. X. p. 175. The same writer ascribes to Louis XIII. the merit of several great undertakings, which have commonly been attributed to cardinal Richelieu.

* *De Retz*, I. p. 10.

† *Mad. de Motteville*, I. p. 397. "Cette severité du regne du feu roi, et l'humeur du cardinal Mazarin avoit beaucoup contribué a cette rudesse."

‡ *Ibid.* I, p. 396. "Il (le marechal de Bassompierre) continuoit à vivre dans les mêmes maximes dans une cour, ou toute au contraire les hommes tenoient quasi pour honte de leur rendre quelque civilité."

§ *Ibid.* I. p. 430. "Il faisoit le fanfaron contre la galanterie, et disoit souvent qu'il y renonçoit."

glory of their leader, they assumed at court all the airs of persons of the highest importance.* Refined gallantry was banished for nearly half a century, from the French court, till it was recalled by the young and gallant monarch, Louis XIV. During its disgrace, it sought and found protection from a few ladies, who possessed great consequence through their beauty, talents, and virtues, and who gave it a form, and directed it to purposes very different from those of the gallantry of the age of Henry IV. This new gallantry which became prevalent among the smaller and more select portion of the French court, may be denominated the high or Spanish gallantry.

This new species of gallantry owed its existence to the marquise de Sablé, who, about the time when the young queen Anne arrived in France,† was one of those ladies who were most distinguished for their beauty and accomplishments.‡ Ma-

* *Mém. de Motteville.* I. p. 417. "Ses favoris, qui etoient la plupart des jeunes seigneurs qui l'avoit suivi dans l'armée, et participant à sa grandeur, comme ils avoient eu part à la gloire, qu'il y avoit acquise, avoient été appellez les *petits maitres*, parcequ'ils etoient a celui qui le paroissoit être de tous les autres; et ce titre avoit effacé celui des importans."

† In the year 1616.

‡ *Mém. de Motteville*, I. p. 13, &c.

dame de Sablé possessed a pride equal to her charms, and for that reason she took great delight in the Spanish romances, comedies and poetry, which then began to be much read in France, and still greater in the Spanish gallantry, which pervaded the fashionable works of that nation, and which it was supposed, that the Spaniards had learned of the Moors.* She was convinced that men may without criminality indulge and express tender sentiments for women, that the desire of pleasing instigates the men to the noblest and the greatest actions; that love rouses the dormant faculties of the soul, and inspires it with liberality and every other virtue; but that, on the other hand, the women, who are the ornament of the world, and were made to be served and adored by the men, ought to endure from them no other expressions but those of veneration and respect.† By her beauty and her talents, she gave great weight to these sen-

* *Mém. de Motteville,* I. p. 14. On trouvoit une si grande delicatesse dans les comedies nouvelles et tous les autres ouvrages en vers et en prose, qui venoient de Madrid, qu'elle avoit conçu une haute idée de la galanterie que les Espagnols avoient apprise des Mores."

† *Ibid.* "Mais que d'une autre coté les femmes qui etoient l'ornement du monde, et etoient faites pour être servies et adorées des hommes, ne devoient souffrir que leurs respects."

timents and principles, and the number and distinction of her admirers caused what the Spanish ladies term *fucezas*, to continue till the regency of queen Anne. Among the admirers of the marquise de Sablé, was the duke de Montmorency, who, by his valour, his beauty, and his magnificence, occupied one of the first places among the French courtiers. When this nobleman began, after the Spanish fashion, to express sentiments of the most respectful love for the young and beautiful consort of Louis XIII. the marquise was so highly displeased with his inconstancy, that she refused to see him again, as she could not resolve to share the attentions of her knight with the greatest queen in the world.*

Anne of Austria carried with her from Spain the same notions of gallantry which the marquise de Sablé had acquired only from the perusal of Spanish works. The marks of respectful tenderness publicly paid her by the duke de Bellegarde, and afterwards by the handsome duke of Buckingham, she regarded as a tribute which the whole world owed to her beauty.† She

* *Mém. de Motteville*, I. p. 14.

† *Ibid.* p. 15. "comme un tribut qu'elle croioit être du partout le monde à sa beautè."

was of opinion, that innocent gallantry and an intercourse seasoned with tender reder respect were as undeserving of censure, as the amours of the ladies of the Spanish court, who, though they lived like nuns, and could not converse with the gentlemen, except in the presence of the king and queen, nevertheless boasted of their conquests, as of a thing, which, instead of detracting from their reputation, tended, on the contrary, to exalt it.* So much the greater was her alarm, when, during a walk in the royal garden, the duke of Buckingham, not content with protestations of respectful attachment, took liberties, which the Spanish ladies did not allow their admirers.† So strong were the queen's apprehensions, that she shrieked out, chusing rather, as her confidante informs us, to give occasion for a little scandal, than to suffer her virtue to sus-

* *Mém. de Monteville*, I. p. 15. "etant jeune, elle ne comprenoit pas, que la belle conversation, qui s'appelle ordinairement l'honnête galanterie, où on ne prend aucun engagement particulier, pût jamais être blamable, nonplus que celle que les dames Espagnoles pratiquent dans le palais, où vivant comme des religieuses, et ne parlant aux hommes, que devant le roi et la reine d'Espagne, elles ne laissent pas de se vanter de leurs conquêtes et d'en parler comme d'une chose, qui bien loin d'oter leur reputation, leur en donne beaucoup."

† *Ibid.* I. p. 18, 19.

tain any injury. Her majesty soon pardoned the boldness of the handsome and impassioned foreigner; and she observed, not without considerable emotion, that at his departure his eyes overflowed with tears.* Neither was she offended by a freak of the duke's after he had taken leave. He had proceeded as far as Calais with the bride of his sovereign, when he suddenly gave out, that he was obliged, by the command of his majesty, to return to the French court. He hastened back on the wings of love, and requested an audience of the queen-mother to disguise the real object of his return, which was, that he might have the pleasure of once more seeing the reigning queen. Anne of Austria was instantly apprised of the nature of his errand. She received the duke in bed, in the presence of her first lady of the bed-chamber. The duke fell on his knees beside the bed, and kissed the counterpane with such fervor, as to excite apprehension of still more violent ebullitions of his love. The attendant in vain reminded him that such conduct was contrary to the rules of etiquette. He replied, that, being a foreigner, he was not

* *Mém. de Motteville*, I. p. 19, &c.

bound to know the laws of the French court; and then addressed the queen in language the most tender and impassioned. It was not till the queen had several times repeated her commands, that he could be prevailed on to withdraw; but probably, according to the conjecture of Madame de Motteville, her majesty was not angry with the duke for having expressed his passion in so lively a manner.*

The marquise de Sablé was only a forerunner of the marquise de Rambouillet, who, in the last years of the third decennium of the seventeenth century, assembled around her a court composed of the most beautiful, polished, and accomplished persons of both sexes, and made her house one of the principal seats of gallantry and good taste in France, till some time after the accession of Louis XIV.† Like the marquise de Sablé, Madame de Ram-

* *Mém. de Motteville*, I p. 21.

† The house of the marquise was commonly called *l'Hôtel de Rambouillet*. It was also frequently denominated, the court of Rambouillet; for instance, in the *Managiana*, p. 187. "O que Mademoiselle de Scudery a fait dans son Cyrus une jolie description de la petite cour de Rambouillet!" The marquise de Sevigné expresses herself in still stronger terms: "Avant que Madame de Montausier fut au Louvre, l'Hotel de Rambouillet etoit le Louvre." *Lettres*, V. p. 295.

bouillet endeavoured to separate love from the alloy of sensual appetite, and to refine it into a pure, yet ardent attachment of the soul. She differed, however, from her predecessor in this point—that beside the throne of gallantry, she erected an altar to the Muses, and admitted, not only ladies and gentlemen possessing beauty, rank, and talents, but also poets, and other men of learning and taste, into her circles.

The principal ladies who daily, or at least very often, met at the *Hôtel de Rambouillet*, were, the princess de Bourbon, mother of the great Condé, her daughter, afterwards duchess de Longueville, the duchess de Chatillon, the marquise de Sablé, Madame de Viegan and her daughters, Madame de la Lane, Madame le Bossu, and Mademoiselle de Scuderi.* Among the men, the cardinal de la Vallette, the great Condé, previous to his brilliant victories,† the marquis de Montausier, who afterwards married Mademoiselle de Rambouillet; together with

* *Œuvr. de Voiture*, Pref. and p. 365, 621.

† Respecting the attachment of the great Condé to Mad. de Viegan, and the sudden extinction of his passion, see *Mém. de Montpensier*, I. p. 81.

Balzac, Voiture, Menage, Chapelain, Sarrazin, and other *beaux esprits* of that age, occupied the first places.*

Among the ladies who frequented the *Hôtel de Rambouillet*, or were formed in that school, there were several who sacrificed Platonic gallantry to the gratification of an earthly passion, or at least, who combined the two, and sought only to heighten the enjoyments of love by the polish of refined gallantry. To these belonged the princess de Bourbon, the mother of the great Condé, and her daughter, the duchess de Longueville. The princess of Condé was once joking with queen Anne of Austria on the subject of her former intrigues. She lamented that her old friend, cardinal Bentivoglio, had not been elected pope, instead of cardinal Pamfili, because she could then have boasted of having had lovers of all ranks, popes and kings, cardinals and princes, dukes, marshals of France, and plain gentlemen, for her admirers.† The daughter trod in the footsteps of her mother. During the flower of her age, the duchess de Longueville was surrounded by a numer-

* *Mém. de Montpensier*, I. p. 81.

† *Motteville*, III. p. 548.

ous court of gallants and *beaux esprits*. Neither the gallantry nor the wit of the societies of the duchess de Longueville were so pure as in the *Hôtel de Rambouillet*. It was alleged against the former lady, that the wit to which she was partial, very often degenerated into malicious raillery against her friends and admirers.* At the *Hôtel de Rambouillet*, gallantry was more prevalent than love; and, if the latter were even associated with the former, this love was a sublime passion, which never violated the received laws of the most profound respect.† Of this, a member of the little court of Rambouillet produces the following proof, which, though it may not be regarded as a satisfactory demonstration, yet evinces at least the respectful nature of the gallantry prevailing in the *Hôtel de Rambouillet*.—Voiture one day offered to kiss the hand or the arm of Mademoiselle de Rambouillet: the young lady, however, so warmly resented his temerity, that he never presumed to repeat the attempt.

* *Motteville*, I. p. 458. "La fine raillerie, dont elle et ses courtisans faisoient profession, tomboit souvent sur ceux, qui en lui voulant rendre leurs devoirs," &c.

† *Menagiana*, p. 186. "Il n'y avoit que de la galanterie et point d'amour a l'Hôtel de Rambouillet."

The *Hôtel de Rambouillet* enjoyed for more than a generation the character of being the seat of good taste and good company, and a school for refined gallantry. From the writings only of the ladies and gentlemen, who gave the greatest bias to the tone of this society, it may be judged how far this reputation was merited or not.

All those who frequented the *Hôtel de Rambouillet*, studied to write and speak with precision and elegance. For this reason, they not only paid particular attention to themselves and others in conversation, but each produced poems, letters, and essays, to be submitted to the examination of the rest; or they discussed the merits of new French, Italian, and Spanish publications. Among the men who belonged to the society at the *Hôtel de Rambouillet*, it was doubtful whether Balzac or Voiture spoke and wrote with the greatest excellence; and it would almost appear, that the ladies adjudged the palm to the latter, and the gentlemen to the former. Voiture frequented the *Hôtel de Rambouillet* for a much longer period, and with greater assiduity than Balzac, and continued, till his death, the fa-

vourite of the ladies.* On the other hand, when the men compared Voiture and Balzac, they made use of this expression: "You love to praise Voiture, but Balzac you are forced to praise."† Menage denominated Balzac the author and restorer of the French language, who spoke better than he wrote, and so far excelled all others in speaking and writing, that their united talents could not have produced a more perfect period, than the periods of Balzac in general were‡. The solicitude with which Balzac and Voiture strove to give correctness and elegance to their language,§ could not fail to communicate a certain stiffness to their conversation and their writings. Menage, in his ma-

* *Præf. des Œuvres de Voiture.* "Car dans la delicatesse du goust des dames, et l'extréme politesse qu'elles demandent dans les escrits et dans l entretien, il a toujours eu le bonheur de leur plaire, et de reussir auprès d'elles."

† *Menagiana*, p. 262. "C'est à mon gré un esprit juste que celuy qui a dit: on aime à louer Voiture, on est forcé à louer Balzac."

‡ *Ibid*, p. 112. "M. de Balzac est le restaurateur de notre langue---M. de Balzac est l'auteur de notre langue telle qu'elle est aujourdhui."

§ On this subject Menage relates an amusing anecdote, p. 164.

turer years, discovered the faults of both;* nevertheless, he still maintained, that these two writers, together with the other *beaux esprits* of the *Hôtel de Rambouillet*, and particularly Balzac, first formed the French language, and had caused the art of writing well to become an universal attainment.†

Besides the improvement of the language, the *Hôtel de Rambouillet* was productive of another important advantage: if it did not create the tone of good company, it however paved the way to it. The *ton*, which prevailed in the *Hôtel de Rambouillet*, had the same defects as the language and gallantry of that celebrated house: it was not sufficiently easy and natural, and notwithstanding all its affected delicacy, it was very often extremely coarse. No person took more pains to acquire the *ton* of good company, or to amuse the ladies in such an agreeable and instructive manner as Voiture.‡

* *Menage*, p. 324. "M. de Balzac etoit trop pompeux; Voiture avoit un stile trop enjoué."

† *Ibid.* p. 324. "Au commencement que je vins a Paris, il n'y avoit qu'une douzaine de personnes que ecrivissent raisonnablement en François. Presentement tout le monde ecrit bien."

‡ *Prof. de ses Œuvres.* "Je me trompe si le suffrage d'aucun homme luy est plus avantageux que l'approbation

The princess de Condé, the marquise de Sablé, and the marquise de Montausier, authorized the editor of Voiture's works, after his death, to declare publicly, that, in their opinion, Voiture approached very near to the pattern of a perfect courtier, or, as the French would say, of a *galant homme*.* This excellent companion was not less jocose in his conversation than in his letters; and for that reason, it is interesting to read how he jested with the cardinal de la Vallette and the great Condé. "I imagine," he thus wrote to the former, "that at the time when you honoured me with your last letter, you conceived that my respect for you had gained you a certain degree of consequence in the world; that on all occasions I had given you innumerable proofs of the honour of my friendship; and that I had lent you a couple of thousand crowns in an embarrassment, when you could not obtain credit elsewhere. At

de ces femmes illustres, qui ont fait de son entretien et de ses ecrits un de leurs plus agréables divertissements."

* "Cette princesse et ces dames veulent bien que je dis d'elles pour la gloire de nostre autheur, qu'elles ont jugé qu'il approchoit de fort près des perfections qu'elles se sont proposées pour former celuy, que les Italiens nous descrivent sous le nom de parfait courtisan, et que les François appellent un galant homme."

least, from the manner in which you thank me, and speak of yourself and me, I have every reason to suppose that, in your reveries, you mistook the one for the other, and without being aware of it, put yourself in my place. In no other case could you have written as you do, except, perhaps, you think that there can be no greater happiness than to do good to others, and therefore consider yourself under obligation to those who afford you an opportunity of obliging them."* To the prince of Condé he wrote, after the battle of Rocroy,† as follows: "To say the truth, Monseigneur, I know not what you could be thinking of; for, without telling a lie, it was rather too violent and audacious of you, at your age, to attack two or three veteran generals, whom you ought to have respected. I cannot tell what father Musnier will say to it, but all this is contrary to good manners, and affords abundant matter for future confession. I had always heard that you were obstinate as the devil, and that it was not prudent to dispute with you; but I never could have thought it possible for you to

* *Œuvres de Voiture*, p. 274.

† *Ibid.* p. 469.

fly into such passions. If you go on in this manner, you will render yourself unbearable to all Europe; and neither the emperor nor the king of Spain will be able to endure you." The tone in which the principal characters at the *Hôtel de Rambouillet* jested with their favourite, is still more extraordinary. Voiture was a man, whose diminutive size and infirmity would have excited compassion in well-bred and sensible persons. Mademoiselle de Rambouillet rallied him in a cruel manner on these natural defects, in most of the letters which she wrote to Voiture during his journey to Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands. She sent, in the name of her dwarf, a challenge, which Voiture politely declined, but which he could scarcely have read with pleasure.* Another time she expressed the delight she should feel, if he should be taken by corsairs in his voyage from Lisbon, and carried to Algiers.† Soon afterwards she wished him hanged, but not till she could have satisfaction of witnessing his execution. In the same letter she said: "I know not how I have humbled myself so much.

* *Œuvres de Voiture*, p. 219.

† *Ibid.* p. 226.

Cease scolding, and write to me every week." These indelicate jokes Voiture answered in the following words:* "If you were not the most amiable creature in the world, you would be the most hateful. You have a pride, which would be insupportable in any other person. You beg peace in the manner in which others give it; and to terminate a quarrel, you make use of words which would be sufficient to produce a war." But Madame and Mademoiselle de Rambouillet did not confine themselves to jokes, however coarse they might be. "Last Friday," says Voiture, in a letter to Mademoiselle de Bourbon,† "I was tossed in a blanket, because I had not made you laugh at the time appointed me. Madame de Rambouillet passed this sentence on me at the request of her daughter and Mademoiselle Paulet. In spite of all my struggles and outcries, the blanket was brought, and four of the strongest servants were chosen to perform the operation. So much I can tell you, Mademoiselle, that never man flew higher than I did, and that I had never imagined fortune intended to raise me to such elevation. At

* *Œuvres de Voiture*, p. 243, 244.

† *Ibid.* p. 287.

every toss, they lost sight of me, and I mounted higher than eagles ever soared. I saw the mountains like mole-hills beneath me.; I beheld the winds and clouds moving under my feet. I discovered regions that I had never seen, and oceans of which I had never heard. Nothing is more diverting than to embrace so many objects at once, and to survey at one view the half of the world. Nevertheless, I assure you, Mademoiselle, that it is impossible to look at all these things without some uneasiness, when you are in the air, and know for certain, that you must fall down again. What frightened me most was this, that when I was aloft the blanket appeared so small, that it seemed almost impossible for me to fall into it again."

The gallantry shewn by the men at the *Hôtel de Rambouillet* to the ladies, was the reverse of the mode in which the ladies jested with the gentlemen, and these with each other. The gallantry of the *Hôtel de Rambouillet* may justly be characterized an everlasting series of protestations of the purest and most ardent Platonic love, of servile respect, and of enthusiastic admiration of the excellencies of the ladies. These protestations were almost

all expressed in hyperbolic antitheses. This opinion I cannot justify, except by proofs drawn from the works of the two writers who were regarded as models of refined gallantry. Madame de Rambouillet had written word to her friend Balzac, who had retired to the country, that he would soon receive a small chest filled with all sorts of perfumes. For this present, the gallant letter-writer thanked her in the following terms: "The Roman poets, indeed, speak highly of the essences which Venus and the Loves presented to one of their fair countrywomen. But the essences which I expect, come from a better hand than that of an ordinary Venus and her children; that is, from the truly celestial goddess of love and her adorable daughter; from Virtue, who has rendered herself visible to the eyes of men; from that perfection which has descended from the celestial abodes. I make public boast of these presents. I regard all the goods of the earth, all human things as far beneath me. But, as there is no glory equal to mine, so also, I have the honour to assure you, that there is no gratitude to be compared with that which fills my bosom. I am not able to express in words the smallest part of what I feel."

Voiture was not surpassed in gallantry by his rival. "I have long ceased," says he, in a letter to Mademoiselle de Rambouillet,* "to seek natural causes for most of the things that are in you. I know that a person who is full of miracles can sometimes work miracles; but, great as your's may be, the most extraordinary miracle you ever performed is, that you have imparted joy to a person in my condition, that you have made happy a man who is at once poor, exiled, and sick. By this you have shewn that Fortune, who has the world under her feet, is herself under your's, and that you can confer happiness on those whom she dooms to misery." On another occasion he thus writes to the same young lady.† "I confess, Mademoiselle, that I fear you more than any thing in the world; but if the respect which I owe you allows me to say it, I love you more than I fear you. Though you sometimes fill me with terror, yet I take delight in beholding you under all the the forms in which you appear; and, even were you to transform yourself once a week into a dragon, still in that case I should

* *Œuvres*, p. 129.

† *Ibid.* p. 218.

love your claws and your scales. The prodigies which I discover in your person induce me to believe, that such a metamorphosis may some day take place; and the circumstance you mention, that three times a month you are quite unsociable, appears to indicate a disposition to such a change."

Mademoiselle de Rambouillet made a short excursion, on which her gallant admirer expressed the pain of separation in the following terms:* "Since your departure, no person here has died except myself. I have no hesitation to tell you so plainly, because I think you will not give yourself much uneasiness about it.—Know then, Mademoiselle, that since the day on which you left us, I can neither eat, speak, nor see, and that nothing more is wanting but to be buried. I intreat you not to laugh at what I am writing; for, in good earnest, it is wrong to mock the dead, and if you were in my place, you would certainly not like to be treated so yourself."

The higher were the birth and rank of the ladies, the more respectful was the gallantry shewn them. Mademoiselle de

* *Œuvres*, p. 357.

Bourbon had written a few lines in one of Mademoiselle de Rambouillet's letters, and likewise the superscription of the letter to Voiture. Hear the manner in which he expressed his gratitude for this distinguished honour.* "Because the honour you confer on me in loving me was my first introduction to the notice of the illustrious lady, I humbly request you to assist me in expressing the thanks which I owe her, and in returning her favour in the way in which I am able. I kiss, a thousand times, the feet of the incomparable princess who wrote four or five words in your last letter, and thus gave inestimable valuable to a present in itself so precious."

Nothing can be more uniform and insipid than those exaggerations, which were considered in the *Hotel de Rambouillet* as the essence of genuine gallantry. In writing to other accomplished ladies, or concerning them, he used nearly the same hyperboles, which he had already worn out in his letters to Madame and Mademoiselle de Rambouillet. "You have shewn me," says he, speaking of the countess of Carlisle, in a letter to Mr. Gor-

* *Œuvres*, p. 229.

don, an Englishman,* "in one single person more treasures, and at the same time, more lions and leopards than the Tower of London contains. There is not another person of whom it is possible to say so much good and so much ill. Notwithstanding the danger with which the recollection of her is attended, I have not been able to refrain from thinking of her; and, in truth, I would not exchange the picture of her, which is left in my soul, for the finest that I ever saw. It must be acknowledged that she is a lady full of enchantments, and there would not be under heaven a woman so worthy of affection, if she but knew what love is, and if the sensibility of her heart were equal to the strength of her understanding."

To a Mademoiselle de M——, Voiture thus wrote:† "I sleep but little, and that with great difficulty. I have lost the taste for every thing. I am even debarred the enjoyment of the air, for I rather sigh than breathe. I am not certain from what cause all this may proceed, whether from my cold or my love; but most probably the latter is the principal occasion of my

* *Œuvres*, p. 222.

† *Ibid.* p. 333.

malady, since I obtain the greatest relief from writing to you."

According to all appearance, it was the same young lady whom Voiture thus addressed in a subsequent letter: "You possess so many charms, such an enlarged understanding, such soundness of judgment, so much courage, fortitude, and greatness of soul, that it is impossible to embrace all these perfections at once. I know not whether I am mistaken, but it seems to me as if I had obtained a thorough knowledge of you. But now my mind is so full of you, that no room is left for any other object. My soul is wholly engaged in contemplating you. This employment is attended with such delight, that though I stand on the brink of the most tremendous precipice, I am not conscious of my danger, and at the very moment when I am on the point of losing you, I rejoice at having found you. I protest to you, my dear M——, that I write nothing but what I feel, and that what I write describes but a very small portion indeed, of my sensations. I cannot find words to express my affection for you. It exceeds all that language can describe, or imagination conceive.*"

* *Œuvres*, p. 540.

With no less gallantry, Voiture thus wrote to another young lady:* "The greatest pleasure I ever felt in my life is, that I have beheld you, and the greatest pain, that I can no longer see you. Let me die if I have set eyes on any thing that could charm me since I parted from you. I have left behind at Blois, all the pleasures which I used to find at Paris; I now feel here greater *ennui* than I ever yet felt in any place in the world. It is, in truth, a most extraordinary circumstance, that I should have found in one person all that is amiable in the world; that I should have conceived a passion for this person the very moment I saw her, and that I lost her again just at the time when I began to love her. At the very instant when happiness seemed within my reach, did it again vanish from my view; and it is no wonder, that within so short a period I should have been so highly rejoiced and so deeply afflicted."

In a letter to the cardinal de la Valette, Voiture described to this gallant and warlike head of the church, a young lady, who was not indifferent to him, and concludes his delineation with the following

* *Œuvres*, p. 578.

traits: "From her earliest infancy she stole the whiteness from snow and ivory, and from pearls their purity and brilliance. From the stars she borrowed light and beauty, and not a day passes but she steals some rays from the sun, and adorns herself with them in the face of the whole world. At an assembly recently held at the Louvre, she robbed all the ladies of their charms, and the diamonds which covered them of all their lustre. She spared not even the jewels of the crown, and appropriated to herself whatever was most beautiful and resplendent. Though all the world is acquainted with her violence, yet no one makes any resistance to it. She does with impunity whatever she pleases."

The want of good taste, which produced all these affected exaggerations frequently led the gallant and respectful Voiture beyond the bounds of decorum, and even of decency. Anne of Austria,* at the beginning of her regency, was taking a ride with the princess of Condé, and met, during

* *Mém. de Madame de Motteville*, I. p. 235. That lady describes Voiture's character in these words: "Cet homme avoit de l'esprit, et par l'agrement de sa conversation il etoit le divertissement de belles ruelles des dames qui font profession de recevoir bonne compagnie."

their excursion, this favourite of the ladies immersed in thought. Out of civility to the princess, who entertained a great esteem for Voiture, the queen asked the poet what he was thinking about. Voiture, without much hesitation, replied in the following verses, which I should consider as his best, if a queen had not been the subject of them. Anne of Austria, however, far from being offended, was so pleased with them, that she kept them for a long time in her cabinet.

Je pensois que la destinée
Après tant d'injustes malheurs,
Vous a justement couronnée
De gloire, d'eclat et des honneurs ;
Mais que vous etiez plus heureuse
Lorsque vous etiez autrefois,
Je ne veux pas dire amoureuse ;
La rime le veut toutefois.

Je pensois que ce pauvre Amour,
Qui toujours vous preta ses armes,
Est banni loin de votre cour,
Sans ses traits, son arc et ses charmes :
Et ce que je puis profiter,
En passant près de vous ma vie,
Si vous pouvez si mal traiter
Ceux qui vous ont si bien servie.

Je pensois, car nous autres poëtes
Nous pensons extravagamment,
Ce que, dans l humeur où vous êtes,
Vous feriez si dans ce moment

Vous avisicz en cette place
Venir le duc de Buckingham,
Et lequel seroit en disgrace,
De lui ou du Pere Vincent.

The indecorous boldness of these lines is, however, more excusable than the *Stances sur une Dame dont la Juppe fut retroussée en versant dans un carrosse, a la campagne,* of which I shall only quote the following :

Phillis je suis dessous vos loix
Et sans remede a cette fois,
Mon ame est votre prisonniere :
Mais sans justice et sans raison,
Vous m'avez pris par le derriere,
N'est ce pas une trahison?

Je m'etois gardé de vos yeux,
Et ce visage gracieux,
Qui peut faire pâlir le notre,
Contre moi n'ayant point d'appas,
Vous m'en avez fait voir un autre,
De quoy je ne me gardois pas.

En decouvrant tant de beautés
Les Sylvains furent enchantés,
Et Zephyre voyant encore,
D'autres appas que vous avez ;
Méme en la presence de Flore,
Vous baisa ce que vous sçavez.

On m'a dit qu il a des defauts,
Qui me causeront mille maux
Car il est farouche à merveilles ;
Il est dur comme un diamant,
Il est sans yeux et sans oreilles,
Et ne parle que rarement.

Mais je l'aime et veux que mes vers
Par tous les coins de l univers,
En fassent vivre la memoire ;
Et ne veux penser desormais,
Qu'a chanter dignement la gloire
Du plus beau cu qui fut jamais.

Phillis cachez bien ces appas,
Les mortels ne dureroient pas,
Si ces beautés etoint sans voiles ;
Les Dieux qui regnent dessus nous,
Assis là-haut sur les etoiles,
Ont un moins beau siege que vous.

One of the most celebrated of the gallantries of the *Hotel de Rambouillet*, was the garland which all the *beaux esprits*, who met at that house, composed for the daughter of the marquise de Rambouillet. This garland consisted of a series of flowers exquisitely painted, and each of which had a gallant madrigal underneath it.* Menage gave the preference to these lines, written by the poet Desmarets on the violet:

Modeste en ma couleur, modeste en mon sejour,
Franche d ambition, je me cache sous l herbe,
Mais si sur votre front je puis me voir un jour
La plus humble des fleurs sera la plus superbe.†

* *Menagiana*, p. 408. *Thomas*, p. 139.

† The following particulars respecting this extraordinary piece of gallantry, inserted by M. Chardon de la Rochette, in the *Magasin Encyclopedique* for May, 1807, are of sufficient interest to justify their introduction in this place.

What the whole *Hôtel de Rambouillet*, and especially Balzac and Voiture, were for refined gallantry, such was Mademoiselle de Scuderi for tender, or rather, serious and respectful love. Menage retained the highest esteem for the romances of Mademoiselle de Scuderi, much longer than for the works of Voiture and Balzac,

Mademoiselle de Rambouillet, afterwards marquise de Montausier, was the person for whom the celebrated garland, called *le Guirlande de Julie*, was composed. It was a folio manuscript, written by Dujarri, and ornamented with flowers, painted in miniature by Robert. This singular monument of the most refined gallantry was sold in 1784, at the sale of the duke de la Valliere, for 15,510 livres. It is said to be now in England. It is well known that the *beaux esprits* of the age wrote verses to be placed under each flower. The most highly-esteemed of these inscriptions, was that of the violet, which subsequent compilers have frequently disfigured. In the manuscript it was as follows :

Fleur sans ambition je me cache sous l herbe,
Modeste en ma couleur, modeste en mon sejour ;
Mais si sur votre front je puis me voir un jour,
La plus humble de fleurs sera la plus superbe.

This madrigal, equally delicate and ingenious, is anonymous in the manuscript ; but its author was Desmarets de Saint Sorlin, author of *Clovis* and the *Visionnaires*, who was born at Paris in 1596, and died on the 28th of October 1674, a member of the French Academy.

M. de la Rochette farther informs us, that Breugiere de Barante was the first that gave this madrigal the form in which it appears above, in his *Recueil des plus belles Epigrammes des Poetes François*. Paris, 1698, two vols octavo. *(Translator.)*

or for the gallantry of the *Hôtel de Rambouillet*. He pronounced on her this singular encomium, that she was the first who invented *tender love*,* and continued to prefer her works to succeeding publications of the same nature. "In the novels of this learned woman," says he,† "there are a thousand things which cannot be sufficiently admired. All that was good in the ancients she borrowed and improved, like the prince in the fable, who converted every thing into gold. Her works may be read with manifold advantage by those who have a susceptible mind, and an ardent desire of information. Those who find fault with the prolixity of her works, betray the shallowness of their understandings. Shall we despise Homer and Virgil, because their poems contain numerous episodes, which certainly delay the catastrophe? Such must be extremely ignorant, as do not perceive, that her *Clelie* and *Cyrus* belong to the class of epic poems. Mademoiselle de Scuderi has made such excellent use of her materials, and has introduced so many admirable

* *Menagiana*, p. 334. "C'est Mademoiselle de Scuderi qui a inventé l'amour de tendresse."

† *Ibid*, p. 187, &c.

things with such consummate skill, that in this way nothing can sustain a comparison with her. If I except a few obsolete expressions, the rest will maintain its reputation long after the criticisms written upon it are forgotten. The novels and romances that have since appeared, are a proof of the bad taste of our age. They are mere tales, containing nothing that can instruct or exalt the mind. On the contrary, the works of Mademoiselle de Scuderi inspire us with sublime sentiments, such as compositions of this kind ought to excite."

The writings of Mademoiselle de Scuderi, had a much more powerful and extensive influence than those of Balzac and Voiture. Youth, who read her works with transport, long imagined that the real world resembled the world of romance, which Scuderi had delineated. "I had formed," says the count de Rabutin,* "such ridiculous ideas of the respect due to the sex, that my beautiful widow might have pined to death, had she not perceived my foible, and inspired me with courage. It was long before I noticed the steps she took for that purpose. I was so firmly

* *Mémoires*, I. p. 33.

persuaded that, in order to gain the affections of a woman of quality, a man ought long to sigh and whine, and write and solicit, that I never considered myself worthy of the least favour, since I had not done any of these things."

The count de Rabutin soon corrected the notions which the novels of Scuderi had given him. The case was very different with such men, whose minds were in unison with the tone of the works of this remarkable woman: these spoke, wrote, and acted throughout their whole lives like the heroes of Mademoiselle de Scuderi's romances. Such was the enthusiastic duke de Guise, who, during the regency of Anne of Austria, attacked the power of the Spaniards in Lower Italy, in the same manner as the knight-errants in the days of chivalry attacked windmills, giants, or other monsters. The duke de Guise, on his departure for Italy, was deeply enamoured of a Mademoiselle de Ponts, the most dissolute of the queen's *filles d'honneur*. He placed his mistress in a convent, where she enjoyed the unbounded liberty of living just as she pleased, and availed herself of this liberty in the fullest extent. Anne of Austria thought it expedient to remove her to

another convent, where she had less opportunity of giving public scandal. Mademoiselle de Ponts complained to her lover of this proceeding; and the duke repeated and exaggerated the complaints of his mistress in two letters to the queen and the cardinal Mazarin, which Madame de Motteville has preserved, on account of their singularity. The letter to the queen is as follows:

"Hazarding my life, as I have done, for your majesty's service; conquering kingdoms, and subjugating provinces for you; keeping nations in obedience by my resolution alone, without money and without bread; waging war without soldiers or ammunition; exposing my person to daily perils from treachery and poison; and aspiring to no other reward for my exertions than to pass the remainder of my life, after all these hardships, in the society of Mademoiselle de Ponts; I was in hopes that your majesty would treat her with kindness, in order to testify some satisfaction for the ardour with which I seize every opportunity of rendering you services, attended with such peril; being betrayed and abandoned by all the world, so that I may assert, that none but myself would have attempted any thing of the kind. I

must confess, Madam, that it gave me extreme pain, when I was informed with what rigour she is treated by your majesty. I therefore most humbly request, that for the sake of all the services I have performed, and intended to perform, for the crown, you will grant me this reward, that a different kind of conduct may be observed with respect to her. This I hope from your bounty, if you have any regard for the life of one, who is, with the greatest respect," &c. &c.

The letter to the cardinal was written in a style still more romantic. "If," said he, "the passion which I have always cherished for Mademoiselle de Ponts, and which is at this moment stronger and more faithful than ever, were not well known to your eminence, you might perhaps be astonished that I touch on no other subject than my private grievances. In consequence of the despair into which I am plunged, I must acknowledge, that neither ambition, nor the hope of acquiring immortality by extraordinary achievements, caused me to embark in the perilous enterprize in which I am engaged. The only idea which animated me was, to perform something glorious, to render myself more worthy of the favour of Mademoiselle de

Ponts; and then, after so many dangers and hardship, to spend in happiness with her the remainder of my life. Without her, neither fortune, nor grandeur, nor life itself, is of any value. If no hope of being one day happy with her is left me, I shall renounce every sentiment of honour and ambition, and indulge no other thought than that of perishing, resolved not to survive an affliction so acute, which destroys my repose, and disturbs my reason."

Throughout the whole history of the count de Lauzun and Mademoiselle de Montpensier, as related by the count de Rabutin,* prevails that serious and respectful passion taught by the Demoiselle de Scuderi. The princess d'Orleans, who afterwards assumed the name of the princess de Montpensier, had, in the flower of her youth, rejected the proposals of several kings and princes, and had not accepted the hand of Louis XIV. himself, when it was offered her, so readily as she should have done. The princess, one of the most heroic, proud, and capricious females of her time, conceived, in her fortieth year, so strong an attachment for the

* *Hist. amoureuse de Gaules*, II. p. 156, &c.

count de Lauzun, that she condescended to ask the king's permission to marry the object of her affection. Louis XIV. at first gave his consent to the match, but afterwards recalled it. The public, nevertheless, believed that Mademoiselle had been privately married to the count: at least, he frequently treated her so uncourteously, as he would scarcely have ventured to do, had he not been united to the princess by indissoluble ties.* The imitators of the heroes and heroines of Scuderi's romances, fell into the same predicament as the members of the *Hôtel de Rambouillet*. When they strove to express the ardour of their passion, their language very often conveyed indelicate sentiments; but these totally escaped the notice of the romantic females. At the beginning of this connexion, the count de Lauzun one morning paid a visit to Mademoiselle at an earlier hour than usual, and, on entering her apartment, perceived her standing with her bosom uncovered before her mirror. The respectful lover immediately withdrew, but was as quickly called back. A series of

* It is related, that he once called her by her family name, and even obliged her to pull off his dirty boots on his return from hunting.

declarations and counter-declarations followed, and Lauzun expressed himself, among others, in the following terms: "When I opened the door, the first object that presented itself to my view was your royal person, and that in such splendour as my eyes had never yet beheld. This surprise, and the fear of violating the respect due to you, or even of suffering shipwreck, caused me to retire with the greatest precipitation. All the charms and beauties that can delight the eye, are concentrated in your royal person. Rays from these charms and these beauties, were reflected, though at a distance, upon my eyes, and dazzled me. The resplendent whiteness of the lilies, which you conceal with gauze or silk, that enchanting neck, that snow-white bosom, and the incomparable majesty of your whole figure, produced the same effect in me as in the greatest monarchs of the globe. I could not have beheld so many wonders united, without feeling a desire to examine them more attentively. The contemplation of beautiful objects affords delight, delight inflames desire, and desire is not to be satisfied but by enjoyment."*

* "Je sais que la consideration de belles choses donne du plaisir, que le plaisir allume le desir, et enfin que le desir n'aboutit qu'à la jouissance." Mademoiselle d'Or-

The *ton* of the society of the *Hôtel de Rambouillet*, and its gallantry, died away, together with the solemn love and the romances of the Demoiselle Scuderi, during the reign of Louis XIV. I shall treat of the authors, and the consequences of this revolution, when I come to the history of the female sex at the time of that monarch.

leans, on her way to Paris, requested a safe conduct from the generals of the king's army. The marshals Turenne and Ferté replied: that she had only to command, being as much mistress in their army as in her own. *Mém. de Madem. de Montpensier*, II. p. 133.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the powerful Influence of the Female Sex at Courts, and on Public Affairs.

From the most remote periods, the women of the ancient European nations possessed a more powerful influence over the men, than the females of any other people, on account of their superior advantages, natural and acquired. This influence could not but be greatly increased when the women most distinguished for birth and beauty assembled at the courts of kings and princes, and attained to a degree of intellectual cultivation, often surpassing that of the sovereigns and their friends, whom they fascinated. After the sixteenth century, the observation, or rather the complaint, that women were, in general, the causes of the greatest revolutions in states,* was more frequently made. Statesmen and generals as often repeated

* "The ladies are, in general, the principal causes of the greatest revolutions of states; and the wars which ruin kingdoms and empires, scarcely ever proceed from any thing but the effects produced by their beauty, or by their malice." *Mém. de Motteville*, I. p. 176.

the wish that princes and their confidants would check the tongues of the ladies, that they would beware of their suggestions, and exclude them as much as possible from all participation in public affairs, because, by their loquacity and their passions, they often involved men of the highest merit in ruin, and frustrated the most important undertakings.* In the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the charms and the talents of females, their virtues, foibles, and vices no where produced greater effects than in France, because the ladies of no other court were so numerous, so accomplished, and so fascinating. The dominion of the sex, scarcely sustained any diminution, when the kings and their ministers were not in the power either of fondly cherished wives or ambitious mistresses. The ladies some-

* "Le roi devoit clorre la bouche aux dames, qui se meslent de parler en sa cour. De là viennent tous les rapports, toutes les calomnies. Una babillarde causa la mort de Monsieur de la Chataigneraye.' *Mém. de Monluc*, III. p 310. "De-là vient que les femmes, paresseuses et peu secretes de leur nature sont si peu propres au gouvernement, que si on considere encore, qu'elles sont fort sujettes à leur passions, et par consequent peu susceptibles de raison et de justice, ce seul principe les exelud de toutes les administrations politiques." *Test. polit. du card. de Richelieu*, II. p. 11. The cardinal, however, admitted some exceptions.

times ruled with the most unlimited sway, during periods when the supreme authority was in the hands of men who professed the utmost aversion and contempt for the sex, and were the greatest enemies to their influence over political affairs.

Louis XII. was the first king of France, who, or rather whose consort, Anne of Bretagne, formed a court of ladies; and it was during the reign of the same monarch that several females first became members of the privy council. Louis XII. not only granted his beloved qeeen admission to his council, but likewise allowed the duchess de Beaujeu, once his mortal enemy, and the countess d'Angoulême, the mother of his son-in law, a place at the board. By the greatness of her genius, the duchess de Beaujeu had, upon the death of her father Louis XI. wrested the regency from the first prince of the blood, afterwards Louis XII. and conducted it with such success during the minority of Charles VIII. that the monarch in the sequel relinquished, out of gratitude, the chief direction of the affairs of government to his sister.* On account of the universal admiration acquired by Anne de Beaujeu,

* *Gal. des Rois de France,* II. p. 31, 32.

and her extraordinary merits, even Louis XII. permitted her, who had formerly been his inveterate enemy, to continue to take part in the deliberations of the privy council. These she attended as before, till the count d'Angoulême married the princess Claude, the daughter of Louis XII. and the mother of the count obtained a seat and vote at the council-board. Anne de Beaujeu and the countess d'Angoulême soon disagreed. Louis declared himself in favour of the mother of his son-in-law, and from that moment the proud Anne de Beaujeu ceased her attendance, with the fixed resolution to omit no opportunity of taking ample revenge on her adversary. This opportunity too soon presented itself. The countess d'Angoulême had conceived the most violent passion for the count de Montpensier, afterwards constable de Bourbon.* The count, who, after the death of the duke de Beaujeu, was the oldest prince of the house of Bourbon, for this reason preferred a claim to all the property left by the duke de Beaujeu. The duchess-dowager, however, appealed on behalf of her daughter, Susanna, to the common law, and if this would afford her no

* *Gal. des Rois de France,* p 36.

relief; she demanded such a large sum, partly for her dowry and jointure, partly to pay the debts with which the Bourbon estates were encumbered, that the count de Montpensier would have been rather a loser than a gainer by the acquisition. In order to extinguish at once the rights and demands both of the duchess de Beaujeu and her daughter, the count de Montpensier formed the secret resolution of marrying the princess Susanna. Before he signified his intention, Anne de Beaujeu made him an offer of her daughter's hand, chiefly with a view to alienate from the countess d'Angoulême the object to which she was so strongly attached. The count de Montpensier accepted the proposal of the duchess with the greatest joy, and immediately intreated Louis XII. to consent to the match, and to apply in his name for the hand of the princess Susanna. The king so highly approved the measure, that he accomplished the business in three days. The countess d'Angoulême at first thought only of revenging herself on the count de Montpensier for rejecting her love; but she soon found that her love was stronger than her revenge. She importuned her son, who had, meanwhile ascended the throne, in behalf of the be-

loved, but ungrateful count, and at length obliged Francis I. to confer on him the staff of a constable of France. The constable de Bourbon, as he was now called, accepted all the favours of the queen-mother, but without making any return to her love. Nevertheless, the hopes of the countess revived, when, in 1522, the wife of the constable died in child-bed. The chancellor du Prat informed her that the contract of marriage between the constable and his deceased wife was void; because the latter, when she subscribed it, was yet a minor, and the few months that were wanting to her majority had not been compensated either by the royal authority or by a decree of the parliament. If, therefore, the constable should not be disposed to comply with the wishes of the queen-mother, she could now compel him to it by his own interest, because she was heiress to the Bourbon estates, if the constable's claims to them were not valid. The queen-mother represented the state of the case to the constable by means of the admiral Bonnivet, who was more solicitous than any other person for his ruin, or removal, and therefore, strove rather to frustrate, than to forward the purpose of his mission. The constable was so exas-

perated by the procedure of the queen-mother, that he would not have been gained even by a more skilful, or a better disposed negociator. He not only rejected the proposal made to him, but accompanied his refusal with expressions, reflecting severely on the honour of the queen-mother.* The princess, smarting under this new disappointment, now instituted a suit at law, and du Prat conducted the process in such a manner, that the constable had every reason to expect an unfavourable decision. The queen-mother made another essay, and caused it to be represented to her adversary, that in a short time he would be one of the poorest of princes, unless he complied with the wishes of one who was so sincerely attached to him. The constable still remained immoveable. Irritation at the unjust persecutions which he endured, and the fear of being soon stripped of all that he possessed, disposed him to listen to the offers made him through a secret agent, by Charles V. These negociations became known. Francis I. would have pardoned the oppressed hero, and wished to reconcile him with his mother; but the mag-

* *Gal. des Rois de France*, II. p. 46, 48.

nanimous intentions of the king were frustrated by the excessive mistrust which prevailed between the constable and that princess. He fled privately to Italy, where he soon afterwards defeated Francis I. at the battle of Pavia, and took prisoner the monarch himself. Thus the passions of two females involved the whole kingdom in greater danger than any with which it had ever been threatened.

It is much to the honour of Francis I. that his mother and sister had a greater influence over the affairs of the state than his mistresses. The queen-mother was from time to time apprehensive lest the mistresses should diminish her credit with the king; and on these occasions she made no scruple to sacrifice the interest of her son, and the welfare of the realm to her jealousy. The countess de Chateaubrian had procured her brother, Lautrec, the appointment of governor of Milan. In order to ruin the brother of the mistress, and through him, the mistress herself, the queen-mother prevailed on the treasurer, Semblançay, to pay to her orders on the royal exchequer, four hundred thousand crowns, which were destined for the army in the Milanese.* As Lautrec

* *Gal. de Rois de France,* II. p. 17, &c.

received no supplies of money, his troops, composed principally of foreign mercenaries, disbanded themselves. Milan was lost, and Lautrec returned to France with disgrace. His conduct was investigated, and the governor completely justified himself, by alledging the want of money to pay the troops. The treasurer, in vindication of his conduct, produced the orders and the receipts of the queen-mother, and that princess denied all knowledge of the intended destination of the money she had received. The treasurer was imprisoned, and soon afterwards executed.

These circumstances are the most striking, but by no means the only instances that might be adduced, of the mischievous consequences resulting to the whole kingdom, from the passions of the mother and of the mistresses of Francis I. For these mischiefs the queen-mother atoned, by the heroic fortitude with which the supported the tottering state during her son's captivity. She discovered resources where every thing seemed exhausted. She infused courage into her people and her soldiers, as did her daughter, Margaret of Navarre, into the captive monarch. One of the least meritorious of her services was, the conclusion of the peace of Cambray,

in 1529, with Margaret of Austria, which received from the contracting parties, the appellation of *La Paix des Dames.** It was a circumstance unparalleled in the annals of Europe, that two princesses should negociate a peace, in the name of the most powerful of its sovereigns, and that, notwithstanding the difficulties attending the negociations, they should bring them to an amicable termination sooner than could have been expected of the ablest statesman. It was equally unexampled, that in the same century, the queen-mother in France, Margaret of Austria, and Maria of Hungary, in the Netherlands, and Elizabeth of England, should have governed kingdoms, or extensive provinces, with an ability that was not surpassed by the greatest of their contemporaries.†

* *Bellay Mémoir.* II. p. 159.

† *Brantome Dames Gal.* II. p. 90, &c. When Maria of Hungary resigned the regency of the Netherlands, after the abdication of her brother, she thus addressed the assembly of the states: "During the twenty-three years in which it pleased my brother, the emperor, to entrust to me, the regency of the Netherlands, I have employed all the abilities and the resources which God has given me, in order to fulfil the important functions with which I was invested. If I have ever erred in any of these endeavours, I am entitled to indulgence, on account of the uprightness of my intentions. I hope, gentlemen, that

Under Henry II. of France, the ladies still retained their influence through their residence at court, their charms, and their superior mental endowments. Henry II. entertained a sincere love and regard for his consort Catharine de Medicis, and therefore relinquished to her the sole regency of the kingdom during his campaign in Germany.* He was, however, still more fondly attached to the duchess de Valentinois, who maintained her ascendancy over Henry II, in her advanced age, and even after the king had privately become unfaithful to her.† The duchess de Valentinois raised and displaced ministers and generals, created factions, and acquired such extensive influence, that, had it been absolutely necessary to make an election between the two, the courtiers would have chosen rather to incur the displeasure of the king than to forfeit the good graces of his mistress.

you will pardon me for errors of this description. Should, however, any one accuse me of faults committed unconsciously and unintentionally, it will not give me any great concern, since the emperor, my brother, whom to please was my most ardent wish and my chief care, is satisfied with my conduct." *Ibid.* p. 95.

* *Brantome Dames Illust.* p. 50.

† *Galant. de Rois de France*, II. p. 128, 133.

Catharine de Medicis did not acquire a preponderance in affairs of state, till after the death of her husband and of her eldest son Francis II. She had the art to wheedle the regency, during the minority of Charles IX. from the king of Navarre, as she was unable to wrest it from him by force. She retained the authority which she had exercised during the reign of Charles IX. with scarcely any diminution, under Henry III. who had always been the greatest favourite of all her sons. If Catharine de Medicis had possessed goodness of heart equal to her ambition, and as much real genius as spirit of intrigue, she would have been entitled, like the above-mentioned illustrious sovereigns and regents of her age, to the love of her contemporaries, and the admiration of posterity. On the contrary, she had no panegyrists, but among the idle, rapacious, and depraved courtiers, who pronounced her the first of queens, on account of the magnificence and the licentiousness of her court.* If we except the gentlemen and ladies of her court, we shall scarcely find another princess so universal-

* Among the most zealous of her panegyrists was Brantome. See *Femmes illustres*. p. 31, 112.

ly and so loudly execrated, both in her life-time, and after her death, as Catharine de Medicis.* She is accused of having been the sole author of the furious civil war between the catholics and protestants, of the dangerous factions under Charles IX. and Henry III. and in particular of the horrid massacre of Paris.† If even she were not the principal and sole author, but only a partaker and accomplice in those atrocities, this alone would have been sufficient to brand her memory with everlasting infamy. She had recourse sometimes to open violence, at others to the lowest intrigue, at others again, to the charms and fascinating arts of her ladies; and when all these failed, to poison and the dagger.‡ She took such

* In the year 1574 appeared a pasquinade, under the title of *Vie de Sainte Catharine*, which was probably one and the same thing with the *Discours merveilleux de la vie, actions et departments de la reine Catherine de Medicis*, which is printed in the second volume of the *Journal de Henri III.* She had this piece read to her, and laughed a good deal at it. The cardinal de Lorraine acknowledged that the delineation of the Huguenots was correct. The celebrated Henri Etienne was considered as the author. *Journal de Henri III.* I. p. 104, 105.

† Brantome defends her against these charges. See *Femmes illust.* p. 63.

‡ *Journ. de Henri III.* II. p. 440. It is impossible for me to quote all the passages that relate to this subject.

delight in intrigue, that, in the universal opinion of her contemporaries, she very often excited factions and insurrections, for no other purpose than to exert her talents in restoring peace and tranquillity. In persons of her own sex, she could not endure any interference in her peculiar department, the affairs of the kingdom and the court.* This aversion to the intermeddling of women in affairs of state she likewise infused into her son Henry III. That monarch was governed neither by his virtuous and unassuming consort, nor by artful mistresses; on the contrary, he and his minions made it their business to maltreat the ladies whenever they had an opportunity. Nevertheless, this weak king was unable to prevent some of his favourites, and the favourites of these favourites, from commencing, at the instigation of their mistresses, a war, not one

The curious reader may find them pointed out in the Index to the *Journal de Henri III.* under the head of *Catharine de Medicis.*

* *Brantome Dames Gal.* II. p. 329. "Voila pourquoi le feu roy Henry troisiesme, et la reyne sa mère n'aimoient nullement les dames de leur cour, qui missent tant leur esprit et leur nez sur les affaires d'estat, ou qui se meslassent tant d'en parler, ny de ce qui touchoit de près en fait du royaume, comme (disoient leur majestés) si elles y avoient grande part, et qu'elles en dussent estre heritières."

of the most bloody it is true, with the king of Navarre, which was called, *la Guerre des Amoureux*, because the adherents of Henry IV. were animated by the same motives as their adversaries.*

During the reign of Henry IV. the women reigned with unbounded sway at court: the balls, entertainments, hunting-parties, and other diversions being wholly regulated by their wishes. Their influence over the cabinet and councils of Henry IV. was, however, not so great as it had been under his predecessor, though the former disgraced himself and his privy-council, by admitting the fair Gabrielle to the deliberations on affairs of state, and gave and received at the council-board caresses, which he ought to have concealed from the eyes of the whole world.† Sully, the most intimate friend of Henry IV. and the most faithful biographer of that monarch, admits that the attachment to gaming, to women, and to every species of amusement, led his master into many errors, and involved him especially in foolish expence, and an irreparable loss

* Concerning this *Guerre des Amoureux*, see the *Mém. d'Aubigné*, p. 79. and his *Histoire*, Tom. II. Liv. IV. c. 5.

† *Journal de Henri IV.* Tom. II. p. 325.

of time. He, however, denies that Henry IV. was a slave to women, or, if that epithet may be applied to him, that his mistresses never influenced the choice of his ministers, the fortunes of his servants, or the deliberations of his council.* This judgment is correct, particularly as far as regards Sully himself. Henry had promised to marry the fair Gabrielle. After the birth of a second son, which gave inexpressible pleasure to the king, his mistress became more importunate for the fulfilment of this promise than ever.† His majesty could no longer withstand the entreaties of his beloved Gabrielle. He began to make serious preparations to procure from the pope the dissolution of his first marriage with queen Margaret, preparatory to his intended nuptials with his mistress. Sully and others advanced the most cogent arguments against such an union. Henry felt their full force, and several times resolved to entertain no farther thoughts of the promised marriage. Nevertheless, his passion for the fair Gabrielle, and her im-

* *Sully*, III. p. 264. "Que s'il fut, si l'on veut, l'esclave des femmes, jamais pourtant elles ne decideront, ni du choix des ministres, ni du sort de ses serviteurs, ni des deliberations de son conseil."

† *Sully*, I. p. 525, 543.

portunities, always triumphed over his resolution, and he would most probably have complied in the end, had not death snatched away his ambitious mistress. Of all the ministers and confidants of the king, none was so decidedly adverse to his intended marriage with the duchess de Beaufort as Sully. These sentiments converted the mistress into the most inveterate enemy of the man in whose elevation she had co-operated. The duchess was unable to suppress her vexation and her anger with the most dangerous opponent of her fondest wishes, and vented both in the most contumelious expressions, at an explanation, which Henry had brought about between her and Sully. The minister acquainted the king with what had passed, and his majesty immediately repaired with his friend to his mistress. The duchess expected this visit, and had prepared herself for it with all the artifice of a professed courtezan. Arrayed in the highest splendour of her beauty, she went with the most flattering complacency to the door of her outermost apartment to meet the king. Henry entered with an air of gravity; and, without indulging in the usual caresses, he said to her: "Let us go into your chamber, I want to speak

with you both, and to make you live peaceably together." After the door was shut, and the contiguous apartments had been examined, he took Sully and his mistress by the hand. He represented to the latter, that he had been chiefly induced to chuse her for his mistress, because he took her to be of a gentle disposition, but from her conduct to his only faithful and truly-devoted servant, he perceived how much he had been mistaken. He advised her, at the same time, to alter her behaviour, assuring her, that he would not for her sake dismiss his friend, on whom he bestowed the highest commendations.

The duchess de Beaufort prefaced her vindication with tears, sobs, and sighs. She affected an air of humility and meekness, and summoned to her aid all the expedients which she knew to be capable of softening Henry's heart. After all these little preliminaries, she began bitterly to complain, that, instead of the love, which she had reason to expect, for all the sacrifices she had made, she had received no other return, than in being herself sacrificed to one of the king's valets.*

* "Elle se voyoit sacrifiée à un de ses valets."

She recounted all the enmities that Sully had shewn to herself and her children, and fell back, as if overwhelmed with despair, upon a bed, where she vowed to await death after so grievous an affront. This attack was violent, and such as Henry was unprepared for. His resolution failed for a moment, but he recovered himself so quickly, that his mistress did not perceive it. He therefore proceeded in the same tone as before, and told her, that she might have spared all those artifices for so trivial a cause. This reproach she felt most keenly. She renewed her tears, and cried aloud, that she clearly perceived she was ruined, and that the king, to complete her disgrace and Sully's triumph, had brought him as a witness to the severest things that can be said to a woman. These tears and complaints produced an effect the reverse of what was intended. "By God!" replied the king, "I see you have been tutored to act this farce, in order to prevail upon me to discard a faithful servant, with whose assistance I cannot possibly dispense. I shall, therefore, tell you plainly, that if I am reduced to the necessity of chusing, I would rather lose ten mistresses like you, than one faithful servant such as Sully."

After this explanation, the king hastily withdrew, regardless of the condition in which he left his mistress. Henry knew the duchess de Beaufort better than Sully, who was actually deceived, and moved by the lady's undissembled grief, as he conceived it to be, till she herself convinced him of his error. The mistress began to be seriously apprehensive of losing the king for ever, and, accordingly, she all at once changed her part. She hastened to detain his majesty, threw herself at his feet, not to soften him, but to implore his forgiveness, assumed a gentle and serene countenance, and protested that she never had, and never would have, any other will than the will of the king. Sully never beheld so sudden an alteration of character as that exhibited by the fair Gabrielle. She conducted herself towards Sully with the most amiable politeness, as if all that she had previously said and done had been only a dream, or a mere farce. In fact, no victory over armed enemies ever cost Henry IV. so dear as this victory, which he gained over himself and the artifices of his beloved mistress; for this very reason, because the victory was so difficult, the enemy so dangerous, and the attack so masterly and unexpected, it

not rarely happened that Henry IV. was vanquished and outwitted. How, indeed, could an enamoured king have been always able to resist, when even a discerning minister, cold and inimically disposed, was deluded and affected!—Henry supported his great minister, Sully, against all the artifices and attacks of mistresses, though Sully was several times in danger of being disgraced. Others of Henry's ministers or ambassadors were chosen or dismissed by his mistresses. The king himself had appointed the duke de Luxembourg his ambassador at Rome, to negociate the business of his divorce from his consort, Margaret of Navarre.* The duchess de Beaufort feared that this ambassador would not conduct the business with sufficient zeal and ability, or, at least, that he would not be attentive enough to her interest. She therefore gained over the minister Sillery, promised him the appointment of chancellor, if he would forward her views, and having obtained an assurance to that effect, she prevailed upon the king to dispatch this creature of hers immediately after the departure of the duke de Luxembourg. She did not dissemble that she had ex-

* *Sully*, I. p. 538.

alted her favourite to the important post.* On the contrary, she assisted with her own hands in getting ready his equipages, and caused the king to expedite all the orders that were necessary to enable the ambassador of the royal mistress to appear with the utmost pomp and splendor.

It was the fair Gabrielle that induced Henry IV. in the early period of her favour, to entrust the great Sully with the direction of the finances;† and she too, was the sole cause that Sancy, who had performed important services for Henry III. and Henry IV. and was one of the most intimate associates of the latter, was first dismissed from the superintendence of the finances, and afterwards excluded from the privy-council. Sancy drew upon himself the first mark of displeasure by his satirical reflections on the premature pregnancy and delivery of the fair Gabrielle.‡ The latter disgrace he incur-

* *Sully*, I. p. 538. "La duchesse ne s'embarrassa point de cacher à toute la cour le titre dont elle venoit de decorer son favori. Elle travailla elle-meme à ses equipages," &c.

† *Ibid.* I. p. 449.

‡ *Ibid.* I. p. 387. "Sancy felt, to his cost, what the hatred of a woman, especially of the mistress of a king, is capable of effecting. Henry loved and wished him well; though he was disposed to suppress the superintendence of the finances, he would have retained it solely for the purpose of giving it to him; but Madame de Liancourt found means to prevent this."

red by a severe retort made to the same mistress. The marquise de Monceaux, at a time, when Henry had given her a fresh promise of marriage, once asked his friend Sancy, whether the children she had borne the king before marriage, would become legitimate by that event. "No;" replied Sancy, "for the bastards of the kings of France are always looked upon as the sons of whores."* This affront the duchess de Beaufort never forgot. After she had brought the king of France a second son, and thereby rivetted his affections more strongly than ever, her importunities for the dismissal of Sancy were so frequent and so earnest, that Henry at length consented to sacrifice his friend. The king was ashamed formally to disgrace a man, who had rendered great services to the crown, and who had been his intimate friend for many years. He therefore directed that he should not be summoned to the meetings of the privy-council. Sancy took the hint, and of his own accord retired to his estates.

The regency of the queen-dowager, Mary de Medicis, produced a phenomenon which

* *Sully*, III. p. 305. 6. *L'Histoire de la Mère et du Fils*, I. p. 11, 120, 127, &c.

can scarcely be paralleled in history, that is, a woman, and a queen, governed more absolutely by another woman than a mistress was ever ruled by her lover. This controller of the will of queen Mary de Medicis, was Leonora Galigai, the wife of an Italian of the name of Concini, who, through her influence, was loaded with riches and honours, and at length elevated to the rank of a marshal of France.* Leonora Galigai, and her worthless husband embittered the life of Henry IV. more than all the mischances and enemies that he ever had to endure or overcome. The king very often formed the resolution of sending back the enemies of his peace to Italy, but he never had the firmness to put it in execution, even though Concini and his wife had engaged in a conspiracy against him. A general and just suspicion accused them both of having been privy to the assassination of Henry IV. Notwithstanding this, Mary de Medicis not only left them unmolested, but made them, in the first days of her regency, her sole advisers in the most important affairs of the state. At the instigation of this pair, the

* *Sully*, III. p. 305, 6. *L'Histoire de la Mère et du Fils*, I. p. 11, 120, 127, &c.

whole system of government was changed. An accommodation was effected with the Spanish court, which Henry IV. had been many years preparing to humble. The queen dismissed the most deserving ministers of her husband, or at least refused them her confidence. The great treasures which the murdered monarch had collected for the purpose of attacking the house of Austria, were soon dissipated, and the marshal d'Ancre and his wife appropriated not a small portion of them to their own use. The people and the grandees of the court were not less indignant at the arrogance of the queen's favourites, than the young king and his confidants. Louis XIII. at the instigation of his favourite, Luynes, issued orders for the apprehension of marshal d'Ancre. The officers intrusted with this business, shot the marshal instead of apprehending him, because, as they asserted, he had placed himself on the defensive. After the death of the marshal, his widow was taken into custody, tried as a witch, and executed for sorcery and high-treason. Being asked at her execution, by what magic arts she had so long ensnared the heart of the queen-mother, she replied, "By no other magic

than that which strong minds practise over weak ones."

After the murder and execution of the two favourites, Luynes subjected the queen-mother to the same indignities with which marshal d'Ancre and his wife had treated their adversaries.* This oppression continued till the peace of Pont de Cé,† after which Mary de Medicis regained the confidence of her son, and a considerable influence in the public affairs. This influence, she lost for ever on the celebrated *Journée des Dupes*, by means of cardinal Richelieu, whom she had herself elevated.‡ On that day, the queen pressed her son more urgently than ever, to dismiss the ungrateful cardinal, against whom she had conceived the most violent antipathy. Instead of complying with her request, the king entreated her to pardon Richelieu, and to be reconciled to him. Mary de Medicis, bursting into tears, reproached the king for the partiality which, in her opinion, he cherished for the cardinal, in opposition to his mother. During this warm conversation between

* *Hist. du Mère et du Fils*, II. p. 312, &c.
† *Motteville*, I. p. 6.
‡ *Ibid.* I. p. 56.

the king and the queen-mother, cardinal Richelieu abruptly entered the apartment. His unexpected appearance exasperated the queen to the highest degree. She called him a traitor, and was not sparing of other epithets, equally harsh and contumelious. The cardinal fell upon his knees before her, and did every thing he could to obtain her pardon. She rejected all his intreaties and submissions with the utmost disdain. She remained equally inexorable, when the king likewise knelt before her, and joined his prayers with those of the cardinal. Chagrined at this implacable disposition, the king abruptly went to Versailles. By the advice of the cardinal de la Valette, Richelieu immediately followed him, and in a few hours fixed himself firmly in the king's favour, while the court gave him over for lost. The queen-mother was soon afterwards put into confinement at Compiegne. She escaped from her prison, and first repaired to Brussels; from Brussels she went to England, from England to Holland, and finally, from Holland to Cologne, where the mother and mother-in-law of the greatest kings of Europe died, overwhelmed with indigence and grief.

During the three last centuries, the women never had less ascendancy at the French court, than during the reign of Louis XIII. from the *Journée des Dupes*, to the death of cardinal Richelieu. Neither that minister nor his sovereign had mistresses who possessed the power to assume or obtain any influence over the affairs of the state; and Richelieu's mind was strong enough to hold the mistresses of his confidants in check. Cardinal Mazarin was less attached to women than his predecessor, and enjoying the supreme authority, with which Anne of Austria invested him at the commencement of her regency, he might the more easily have crushed the female cabals, had he possessed a genius so overwhelming and so repulsive as cardinal Richelieu. Before the power of Mazarin was firmly established, the court was divided into three factions, exclusive of the adherents of the cardinal and regent, and all, or at least two of them in particular, were governed by women. These were the faction of the duke of Orleans, that of the prince of Condé, and that of the houses of Vendôme and Lorraine. These parties and the influence of the women, continued during the whole period of the *Fronde*,

when the ladies acted a more conspicuous part than they had ever yet performed at the court of France.*

Previous to the commencement of the civil dissensions, a circumstance occurred at the French court, which may be regarded as an omen of all the disasters that the passions of the sex were destined to produce. In the first year of the regency, one of the women of the duchess de Montbazon found, one day, when her mistress had a large party at her house, a letter from some unknown lady to her lover, who was likewise unknown, and by whom it appeared to have been dropped. Madame de Montbazon, who was the reigning female next to the duchess de Chevreuse, in the party of the houses of Vendôme and Lorraine, made enquiries, with the aid of her numerous admirers, who could be the writer of the letter in question. The suspicion at length fell upon the duchess de Longueville, the daughter of the princess de Condé, whose virtue was at that time unimpeached. Toward these princesses,

* *Galanter. des Rois de France*, III. p. 152, 153. "Il y avoit alors trois partis à la cour; les dames gouvernaient ces cabales." *Thomas sur les Femmes*, p. 119. "La regence d'Anne d'Autriche et la guerre de la minorité furent une époque singulière. Alors tout se menoit par les femmes."

the duchess de Montbazon was not favourably disposed, for many reasons, and especially because they belonged to the powerful house of Bourbon. It was whispered at Madame de Montbazon's that the letter had been written by the duchess de Longueville, to the count de Colligny, and that it had been dropped by the latter. Those who were the first to repeat this conjecture, did not themselves give credit to the story. The report, which had originated at the house of the duchess de Montbazon, spread with great rapidity, and soon reached the ears of the princess de Condé, who was much more highly incensed at it, than her daughter, the duchess de Longueville herself. She immediately repaired to the queen, and accused the duchess de Montbazon, as a malicious slanderer of her daughter. This affair divided the whole court into two great parties. All the ladies sided with the princess de Condé; but almost all the men declared themselves in favour of the fair duchess de Montbazon. On the day that she was accused by the princess de Condé, she was visited by fourteen persons of the rank of princes alone. The number of her adherents soon diminished when the queen joined the party of the princess de Condé;

and the young duke d'Enghien, covered with the laurels he had gained at Rocroy, openly espoused the cause of his sister. The queen paid a visit to the duchess de Longueville, at a country-seat near Paris, whither she had retired, to conceal her her vexation, or to obtain repose. Here the princess de Condé conducted her majesty into a cabinet; both the mother and daughter threw themselves at her feet, and with abundance of tears, implored the queen to grant redress for the injury done them by the duchess de Montbazon. The queen was deeply affected, and promised that the calumniator of injured innocence should make complete reparation for the offence. Madame de Montbazon was commanded to go to the duchess de Longueville, and not only to excuse herself for what was past, but likewise to make a public apology. The form of this apology was the subject of long discussion in the presence of cardinal Mazarin, but it was at length agreed, that the tenor of it should be as follows: that the report concerning the letter, was a falsehood, invented by malicious persons; that, for her own part, she had never given credit to it, being too well acquainted with the virtue of the duchess de Longueville, and the respect

due to her. Madame de Montbazon said all that she was directed, with an air of such haughtiness and pride, as if she had been desirous of convincing every person who was present that she was merely diverting herself with that which was intended for a satisfaction.

The duchess de Montbazon was not content with obeying the commands of the queen in the worst possible manner. She soon afterwards placed herself in direct opposition to her sovereign. The princess de Condé had requested the queen to dispense with her attendance on all occasions, when Madame de Montbazon was present. The latter was well acquainted with the reason of this request, and yet she went to a collation to which Madame de Chevreuse had invited the queen, though her majesty had accepted the invitation only upon condition that Madame de Montbazon should not be there. The queen went with the princess de Condé, and just when she was about to join the company, she was informed, to her astonishment, that Madame de Montbazon was present. The princess was about to retire. The queen, however, detained her, and sent a message to Madame de Montbazon, desiring her to feign a sud-

den indisposition, and leave the company. The haughty female refused to comply. Her majesty returned, out of vexation, with her friend, and next day sent orders to the duchess to leave the court, and to retire to one of her estates. In consequence of this misunderstanding, her admirer, the duke de Beaufort, lost the favour with which the queen appeared to honour him, during the first days of the regency. His mistress instigated him to take revenge on cardinal Mazarin. The duke uttered indiscreet menaces, and which soon caused him to be taken into custody. After escaping from the prison of Vincennes, he, and the duchess de Montbazon, again appeared, at the times of the *Fronde*, on the grand theatre of Paris, where both created nothing but confusion, and the duke alone was occasionally an active instrument in abler hands. Madame de Montbazon was a woman of such low, and yet such violent passions, she had so little capacity for business, and yet such a propensity to intrigue, finally, she was so destitute of the gift of secrecy, that even her admirers were obliged to conceal all important projects from her knowledge, otherwise they would have been frustrated, or at least blazed abroad.

Among all the men who acquired great weight at the time of the *Fronde* among the adversaries of the court, either by birth or rank, or by virtues and talents, none was so weak as Monsieur, or the duke of Orleans; and this weakest of all the enemies of cardinal Mazarin was least governed by women. In the early period of the disturbances, the abbé de la Riviére, and in the latter years of them, the cardinal de Retz were the persons who had the greatest power over the duke of Orleans. But as an almost incredible natural timidity and irresolution were the principal traits in the character of this prince, the most insignificant persons and the most trivial circumstances, for which he was unprepared, were sufficient to shake his firmest resolutions. Hence it frequently happened, that either his mistress, Mademoiselle de Soyon,* or his consort, or his heroic daughter, decided the measures which he actually adopted. "Madame, or the duchess of Orleans, was a woman of sound understanding, and reasoned well on all subjects on which she chose to express her sentiments. From her discourse, she seemed to possess both

* Concerning this lady see *Motteville*, III. p. 193.

spirit and ambition. She was warmly attached to her husband, and hated all that could injure her in his good opinion. Her features were regular, and beautiful, but she was not agreeable; and it was said of her, that she was a handsome woman, without appearing so. She was, at the same time, fat and meagre; she had a full face and a fine neck, but her arms and hands were slender. It might likewise be affirmed of her, that she had not a fine figure, though she was not, in any respect, deformed, In a word, she united in her person, and in her condition, every possible contradiction. Monsieur loved her, and did not love her. He lived continually with her; he never offended her intentionally; and when he saw her dissatisfied, he employed every method in his power to pacify her. When he was at home, he passed almost all his time in her chamber, and frequently expressed great respect for her understanding and her virtue. At the same time, he had a favourite, whom his wife hated, but to whom she could never do any direct injury. The duke frequently laughed at the eccentricities of his wife, at her excessive piety, and her favourites, who were the most absurd creatures in Paris. Those

who were most intimately acquainted with the duchess, asserted, that she was naturally insensible to friendship; and, that, if she loved her husband, this sentiment produced no other effect in her than to make her scold him perpetually; so that their union was as inexplicable as every thing else."*

The cardinal de Retz, who may justly be denominated the soul of the *Fronde*, and the *primum mobile* of its principal enterprizes, had constantly several mistresses at once. He was not really enamoured of any of these mistresses, neither did he suffer himself to be governed by any of them. His connexion, however, with the beautiful Mademoiselle de Chevreuse, and, in particular, the wish to make her fortune by an union with the prince of Conti, had a decisive influence over his measures.† Mademoiselle and Madame de Chevreuse were often present at the most important deliberations;‡ and both occasionally conceived projects, which would have conferred honour on the greatest statesman. The participation of Mademoiselle de Chevreuse in political in-

* *Motteville*, I. p. 444, &c.
† *Mém. du Card. de Retz.* II. p. 302, 303.
‡ *Ibid.* II. p. 209.

trigues depended as much on caprice, as her taste in dress, ornaments and lovers. While she was in love with a person, her passion produced sagacity, gravity, or obsequiousness, but solely and alone towards her lover. It was not long, however, before she treated him as she did the articles of her apparel, which, while they pleased her fancy, she would take to bed with her, and throw into the fire a few days afterwards, when she grew tired of them.*

Among the celebrated women of that time, none had such a character for intrigue as Madame de Chevreuse, and yet her propensity to it was merely the effect of the exterior circumstances in which she was placed from her earliest youth.† In the flower of her age she fell a martyr to her attachment to the young queen Anne of Austria, whose secret connexion with the Spanish court she had known and promoted. On her return from exile, the regent did not receive her former friend and confidante with that benignity which the latter thought that her sufferings entitled her to. Madame de Chevreuse

* *Mém. de Retz.* I. p. 201.

† *Ibid.* p. 201. "Si elle fust venue dans un siècle où il n'y eut eu d'affaires, elle n'eut pas seulement imaginé qu'il y en pût avoir."

joined the party of the Vendômes and of her step-mother, the duchess de Montbazon, and consequently shared the displeasure which that party incurred at the commencement of the regency. In the times of the *Fronde*, she did not abandon the faction to which she had previously belonged; but though she was united by means of her daughter, with the *Frondeurs*, yet she still kept upon terms with the queen, whom she led to believe, that she was implicated with the enemies of the court rather through the persuasions of her daughter than from her own personal inclination.*

Anne of Austria placed such implicit confidence in cardinal Mazarin, and entertained such a mistrust of her own powers, that these reasons alone would have been sufficient to prevent her taking as active a part in public affairs as the abovementioned ladies and others, who are still to be noticed, had she even not been naturally so indolent as she actually was.

* *Mém. de Retz*, II. p. 227. "Il me semble que je vous ai déjà dit que Madame de Chevreuse avoit toujours gardé assez de mesures avec la reine, et qu'elle avoit pris soin de lui faire croire qu'elle étoit beaucoup plus emportée par sa fille que par elle-même à tout ce qui se passoit."

During the removal of cardinal Mazarin, she displayed, according to the report of cardinal de Retz, a promptitude and courage that excited astonishment. She would also have been able, afterwards, to perform much more than she did, had she not resigned the reins entirely into other hands. The cardinal de Retz, whose presence of mind never forsook him in the most imminent dangers, and who was not afraid to cope with the great Condé himself, trembled and turned pale, when, in 1649, after the peace concluded with the court, he went to congratulate the king and queen in the name of the clergy of Paris on their return to the capital.* The queen winked to Madame de Motteville to notice the confusion of the cardinal, and said to the same lady, after he had retired, "What an excellent thing is innocence! His embarrassment," continued she, "gives me pleasure, and if I were vain, I might even say, that it confers glory upon me. At any rate, it cannot but be highly honourable to the cardinal." When we contemplate these and such like traits of Anne of Austria, we are disposed to be-

* *Motteville*, III. p. 186, 187. "Etant auprès de la reine, je remarquai qu'il devint pâle, et que ses lèvres tremblerent toujours, tant qu'il parla devant le roi et elle."

lieve that cardinal Retz has drawn a more unfavourable picture of her than she deserved.* For the rest, none of the other heads of parties, in the times of the *Fronde*, acquired the love and respect of persons of all ranks, sexes, and ages, or retained them, after the the termination of the civil broils, to such a degree, as cardinal de Retz. Previous to his last journey to Rome, this great man called all his creditors together, and informed them, that he could not pay more than a certain portion of their demands, at a time, which he mentioned, and for this instalment, his brother, who was present, would be answerable. When he had finished this address, his creditors unanimously exclaimed, that they had not come to ask him for money, but, on the contrary, they had money at his service, if he wanted any. Among the rest, a lady offered him fifty thousand crowns, which she just then had at her disposal. The cardinal expressed his cordial thanks for their kind offers, and turning to a hatter, said, "This poor man is the only person that it grieves me to be unable to satisfy, as he deserves and as I could wish."—"I am poor, it is true,"

* *Mém. de Retz.* I. p. 195.

replied the hatter, "but I have as much feeling, and as much attachment to your eminence, as your opulent creditors. I ask for no money, but earnestly request you to take these three red hats with you to Rome." The cardinal was affected even to tears, and returned thanks to God for having infused into so many hearts such favourable dispositions towards him.*

The duke d'Enghien, afterwards known by the appellation of the great Condé, had, during the times of the *Fronde*, no mistress to whom he was so much attached, as he had before been to Mademoiselle de Viegan.† For this reason, his sister, the duchess de Longueville, had no less influence over him than over the prince of Conti; and this influence was farther augmented by the circumstance, that his most faithful adherent and confidant, the prince de Marsillac, afterwards duke de Rochefoucault, was the admirer of his fair sister.‡ Love, rather than ambition, was the ruling passion of the duchess de Longueville. She involved herself in political transactions, because she was

* *Menag.* p. 20, 21.

† *Motteville*, I. p. 301, 430.

‡ *Ibid.* I. p. 455, 458.

drawn into them by her lovers. As she therefore, always sacrificed her political views to her love, instead of being the heroine of a powerful party, she became, as cardinal de Retz observes, a mere adventurer.* In the year 1652, she conceived a new passion for the handsome duke de Nemours. This infidelity so exasperated the duke de Rochefoucault, that he became her most implacable enemy, and neglected no opportunity of making her feel his revenge.† He alienated from her not only the affections of her lover, but likewise the heart of the great Condé, who entirely broke with his sister. Though the great Condé, the duke de Rochefoucault, Madame de Longueville, Monsieur and Madame de Bouillon were geniuses of the first, or at least of a very high order, yet no party could act in a more inconsistent and contradictory manner.‡ Not long

* *Mém. de Retz*, I. p. 200. "Comme sa passion l'obligea de ne mettre la politique qu'en second dans sa conduite, d'heroine d'un grand parti elle en devint l'avanturière."

† *Motteville*, IV. p. 342, 60.

‡ *Mém. de Retz*, II. 313. Madame de Longueville, M. de, Bouillon, Messieurs de Nemours, de la Rochefoucault et de Chavigny formoient un cahos inexplicable d'intentions et d'intrigues, non pas seulement distinctes, mais

after the death of her mother, the duchess de Longueville renounced all the vanities of the world, and sought, by a rigid life, and severe penances, to expiate the faults of her youth.* Under Louis XIII. during the regency of Anne of Austria, and even in the reign of Louis XIV. it was very common, not only for elderly ladies, but even for young females, to retire suddenly from the world, into some convent, to atone for the guilt of juvenile irregularities, by the austerity of the remainder of their lives.†

About the same time that the duchess de Longueville lost her former consequence, her rival, the dowager duchess de Chatillon, became an important personage, stepping, as it were, into the situation which the former had occupied. With the assistance of Rochefoucault, the duchess de Chatillon made a conquest of the duke de Nemours, and prevailed upon him entirely to abandon the duchess de

opposées. Je sçais bien que ceux-mêmes qui etoient les plus engagez dans leur cause, confessoient qu'ils ne pouvoient en demeler la confusion.

* *Mém. de Retz.* III. p. 547, 548.

† *Mém de Montpensier*, I. p. 141. Most of them retired to the great convent of the Carmelite nuns at Paris.

Longueville.* With the aid of the same friend, she completely estranged the great Condé from his sister, and persuaded him to give her the considerable estate of Marlon. Nor was this all; for the prince appointed her his ambassadress, to assist in negociating the peace with the court. She accordingly appeared at court, with all the pomp that seemed befitting the importance of her commission. Cardinal Mazarin either did not believe that Madame de Chatillon possessed so much influence over the prince of Condé, as she pretended, or he thought it adviseable, for other reasons, not to enter into any serious discussions with her. He listened politely to all her proposals, and sent her back with great, but empty hopes.

All the ladies, during the time of the regency of Anne of Austria, that have yet been mentioned, were novices in intrigue, when compared with the princess Anne de Gonzaga, who was married to a son of the elector of the Palatinate, and was therefore called *Princesse Palatine*, or more commonly *la Palatine*.† "I am

* *Motteville*, IV. p. 360, 361.

† *Ibid*, I. p 207.

of opinion," says cardinal de Retz,* "that queen Elizabeth, of England, did not possess greater talents for governing a state than the Palatine." We may safely add, that neither Elizabeth, nor any of the ladies who distinguished themselves at the time of the *Fronde*, nor even one of the many great men who strove to displace the cardinal Mazarin, was such a proficient as the Palatine in the art of conducting the most difficult negociations, of gaining minds biassed by the strongest prejudices, and bringing them over to her views. The few examples of the Palatine's talents for negociation, contained in the Memoirs relative to the times of the *Fronde*, cannot but excite general regret, that we have not more numerous particulars concerning this extraordinary woman.† The Palatine belonged to what was denominated the party of the princes, that is, of the princes of the house of Bourbon. To strengthen this party, she first conceived the idea of an union between the prince of Conti and Mademoiselle de Chevreuse, hoping, by this measure, to draw over to her side, not

* *Mém. de Retz.* I. p. 202.

† An excellent piece relative to the hopes of the Palatine, may be a seen among the *Lettres de Bussy*, III. p. 211, &c.

only the houses of Vendôme and Lorraine, but the *Fronde*, properly so called, that is to say, the party of the coadjutor de Retz. The princes of Condé and Conti readily acceded to the proposal. Madame and Mademoiselle de Chevreuse likewise agreed to it without hesitation. The coadjutor alone dismissed all the messengers sent to him by the Palatine, without a satisfactory answer. She at length paid him a visit in person, and represented the intended marriage in such a favourable light, both for himself and for his mistress, that he at last coincided in the views of the Palatine.* When the princes retracted the promise they had given to Mademoiselle de Chevreuse, she again estranged the coadjutor de Retz from their party,† reconciled him with the court, and managed cardinal Mazarin with such address, that he was obliged, against his will, to suffer the cardinal's hat to descend upon the head of his enemy, the coadjutor de Retz.‡ The letter in which she repre-

* *Motteville*, III. p. 582, 3.

† Madem. de Montpensier has not done justice to the Palatine. She relates that the Palatine forsook the party of the princes without reason. I. p. 242. The intrigues and squabbles, of which an account is given in vol. I. p. 243. and V. p. 7, 11. are not much to her honour.

‡ *Mém. du Card. de Retz*, II. p. 226. "Je crois

presented the services of the coadjutor to cardinal Mazarin, was one of the first master-pieces of the kind that ever was penned.* With all her *finesse*, the Palatine evinced integrity in her words and actions. Her only foible was love; and it was not merely to the decorations and embellishments of the tender passion, but likewise to its essentials, that she was attached.†

After the return of the cardinal to court, in 1653, all his enemies and all the arts of the sex sunk into the dust at his feet.‡ He ruled till his death, with such arbitrary power, and gave himself so little concern about the wishes of the regent, that even the patient Anne of Austria became weary of the sense of her

dans la verité lui devoir le chapeau, parcequ'elle menagea si adroitement le cardinal, qu'il ne put enfin s'empecher, avec les plus mauvaises intentions du monde de le laisser tomber sur ma tête "

* *Mém. du Card. de Retz*, II. p. 226. "La Palatine écrivit par lui une grande depêche en chiffre au cardinal qui est une des plus belles pieçes qui se soit peut-être jamais faite. Elle lui parloit entre autres du refus que j'avois faite à la reine de la servir à l'egard de son retour en France, si delicatement et si habilement, qu'il me sembloit à moi-même que ce fût la chose du monde, qui lui fût la plus avantageuse."

† *Ibid.* I. p. 202.

‡ *Motteville*, VI. p. 399, &c.

own insignificance, and the burden of the greatness of her favourite. Under Louis XIV. the sex again rose from the state of humiliation to which it had been reduced.

CHAPTER VII.

Of the Influence of the constant Residence of Females at the Courts of Kings and Princes on the Dress of both Sexes; with Observations on the Origin and Changes of the Fashions till the Reign of Louis XIV.

The original nations of Europe were, from the remotest antiquity, distinguished from those of the other divisions of the globe, not only by the fashion of their garments, but also by their propensity to alter the forms of their dress and attire, and to adopt the costume and ornaments of strangers. The Germans and other nations of the European continent, who were not of Slavonic origin, sometimes wore their upper and under garments longer and at others shorter, sometimes wider and at others narrower. Sometimes they cropped their hair short behind, sometimes they suffered it to grow and to float loosely down their backs, or plaited and braided it in various ways. Sometimes they cherished the beard as well as the

mustachios, sometimes the mustachios only; and at others, they left no vestiges of either. The coverings of the head and feet were subject to frequent variations both of size and form. When a characteristic trait, such as the propensity to new fashions, or to incessant variations in the covering and ornaments of the body, accompanies not one single nation, but all the nations of the same origin through every succeeding age, through all the gradations of civilization, through all the revolutions of their government and laws; the reason must not be sought in variable exterior circumstances, but in the peculiar natural constitution of those nations. The ancient Germans, and the other kindred nations of our division of the globe, were fonder of change in dress and personal ornaments, than any other people, because they were endowed by nature with more independent and unprejudiced minds, and were not wedded to ancient customs, or such as were peculiar to themselves, but impartially compared novelties to which they were unused, with such things as long habit had rendered familiar to them, and cheerfully relinquished the latter, if they found the former deserving of preference; because, more-

over, both sexes felt a stronger desire of pleasing each other, and therefore endeavoured to set off their personal advantages by dress and ornaments, and, on the other hand, were solicitous to conceal their natural defects; because, finally, singularities and striking contrasts were not exactly disagreeable, but very often proved the means of engaging attention, without exciting contempt and disgust. The Orientals and ancient Slavons obstinately adhered to the costume and ornaments of their most remote ancestors, because they thought no others so becoming, so elegant, and so convenient; because they purchased their wives unseen, confined them after the nuptials like prisoners, and treated them as slaves, so that the men had little or no occasion to please the women, and women had none at all to please the men; lastly, because they were so strongly attached, from the indolence of their disposition to ancient customs, that whatever was foreign and new did not merely attract notice, but inevitably incurred raillery, ridicule, and persecution.

The natural propensity of the Europeans to change in dress and ornaments could not fail to manifest itself more or less, in proportion to the opportunities

they enjoyed of seeing foreign costumes and decorations; the inducements which both sexes had to make themselves agreeable to each other, and the degree of merit that was attached to novelty and singularity in attire and personal ornaments. The evidence of history fully confirms the truth of all these observations.

The writers of the fourteenth and fifteenth century make much more frequent mention of the variations of the fashions, than those of more remote periods. The causes of this may easily be discovered, both in the principal events of the last centuries of the middle ages, and in the reciprocal relations of the nations of Europe. The long wars between the English and French, and the military expeditions of the Germans, French, and Spaniards to Italy, caused such peregrinations of mercenaries, and such an intermixture of nations, as had not taken place since the time of the Crusades. The armies of the English, French, and Italians were composed of hired troops of every nation; and those of each contending power were conducted from their home into foreign countries. When the soldiers who had been in foreign service

for many years returned to their native land, they very often retained the dresses and decorations, which announced their extraordinary achievements and adventures; and these foreign costumes and ornaments found admirers and imitators among their countrymen, especially if they were recommended by the rank and quality, or by the reputation and merits of those by whom they were introduced. Similar effects were produced by the passage of foreign troops*, and the journies of merchants, which, in consequence of the increasing prosperity of the towns, particularly those of Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands, had become much more frequent than they had been in former times. Conrad Celtes, the poet, passed this censure both on the merchants who traversed all countries, and on the princes of Germany, who visited every region of Europe, that they despised the dress and language of their forefathers, and introduced foreign dresses and foreign languages in their stead†.

* Thus, for instance, the English, in 1365, introduced completely new fashions into Strasburg and the rest of Alsace. See *Königshofens Chronik*, p. 137. and my *Geschichte des Mittelalters*, II. p. 125.

† *De origine, situ, moribus et institutis Norimbergæ*, c. vi. *in Oper. Pirkheimerii*, p. 127. "Vestium

Though the changes in dress and ornaments were more frequent during the fourteenth and fifteenth century, than at any preceding period, yet this variation in fashions was by no means equal to that of later times. Till the conclusion of the fifteenth century, there was no nation, no capital in Europe that gave the tone to the rest; there were no classes of persons who could be regarded as patterns in dress and fashion; and no artists of either sex to aid the fashion-hunting world with their inventions and their skill. New fashions seldom or ever became general, or extended at the same time to every part of dress. If many imitated foreign fashions, they

forma, sæpe mutabili, ut ab externis gentibus, quibus cum negotiantur, corrupti fuerint: utque diversæ nationes influunt, præbentibus maxime principibus nostris occasionem, qui ut jam in multis aliis a prisca Germanorum virtute desciverunt, ita quoque nedum a patrum suorum, verum etiam a patriæ moribus degeneraverunt, linguamque novam vestemque sequuntur, et patriæ meminisse piget, vitæque prioris, dum pax atque fides fuit, et constantia rebus: nunc Sarmatarum more laxa et sinuosa veste vitta caput redimit, pendentque a corpore pelles. Nunc Pannoniæ hasucum, et Italiæ cuculum patria veste commutantes: nunc Gallorum more limbatas chlamydes et manicatas tunicellas induunt, nunc corpus caliga et tunicella interula strictissime, singulaque membra exprimente stringunt; caputio posteriore parte phalerato et caudiculato suprajecto palliolo ad dexteram aperto, vixque super inguina producto: calceis quondam rostratis, nunc vero obtusis, et circa talos zonatis, crepidis et soleis substratis in Gallicanum morem fuerunt."

did not, on that account, totally discard those of their native country. Every kingdom, every province, every great city, retained its peculiar costume, which was very rarely changed for any other*.

In the fourteenth, and more particularly in the fifteenth century, the Burgundian court was the most brilliant in Europe, and the dresses worn there passed every where else for patterns of elegance. Before the princess Isabel of Bavaria was conducted to the young king, Charles VI. of France, the duchess of Brabant, and her daughter, the duchess of Burgundy, gave her instructions respecting her conduct and demeanor, and provided her with a new dress and ornaments, because her German attire was by far too simple†.

* Towards the conclusion of the fifteenth century, the German ladies, for instance, dressed in general in black. Queen Margaret, of Navarre, says of a German lady of quality, that she wore *des habits noirs à l'allemande. Nouvelles*, II. p. 162. *Edit. de Berne*, 1781. The ladies of Augsburg had, even at balls, large veils, which nearly covered the whole of the face. In the year 1517, previous to a patrician dance, the emperor sent to request the ladies to relinquish their veils, and to appear with their faces uncovered. The ladies returned for answer, through Peutinger the burgomaster, that they would cheerfully comply with the emperor's commands. *P. von Stetten Geschichte der Stadt Augsburg*, I. p. 280.

† *Froissart*, II. p. 287. "Et la duchesse, qui moult etoit sage, endoctrinoit la jeune Demoiselle de Baviere en

The dress in which the royal bride made her appearance, was so much admired at the French court, that two centuries later Isabel of Bavaria passed for the author of the splendour of female dress in France*; though Brantome adds, that the magnificence of that princess was not to be compared with the luxury of subsequent periods†. Nevertheless, the Burgundian fashions were not prevalent at other courts; on the contrary, the German costume was imitated in foreign countries in the fourteenth century; and Henry of Lancaster, at his entry into London, in 1399, wore a short doublet of cloth of gold after the German fashion‡.

maniere et en contenance; et ne la laissa pas en l'habit qu'elle portoit, car il estoit trop simple, selon l'estat de France, mais la fist parer et vestir comme sa propre fille.'

* *Brantome Dames illust.* p. 211. "On donne le lot à la reyne Isabelle de Baviere femme du roy Charles sixiesme, d'avoir apporté en France les pompe et gorgiasetez pour bien habiller superbement et gorgiasement les dames."

† *Ibid.* "Mais à voir dans les vieilles tapisseries de ces temps des maisons de nos roys où sont pourtraittes les dames ainsi habillées qu'elles estoient pour lors, ce ne sont que droleries, bifferies et grosseries au prix des belles et superbes façons, coeffures, gentilles inventions et ornemens de nostre reyne."

‡ *Froissart*, IV. ch. iii. p. 338. "Et avoit adonc vestu un court jacquet d'un drap d'or à la façon d'Allemaigne.

At the commencement of the sixteenth century, the love of variety in dress found much more abundant subject for gratification than during the two preceding ages. By the discovery of both the Indies, the commerce and navigation, the opulence and the intercourse of the European nations were increased in a most astonishing degree; and in the wars in which Charles V. was engaged both with Francis I. and the princes of Germany, the Spanish, French, German, and Italian princes, ambassadors and military officers had much more frequent opportunities than formerly of remarking the dresses of various nations, or of themselves serving as patterns to others. Of all the nations of Europe, the Spaniards were the people who were least disposed to adopt the fashion of other nations, and whose costume in the glorious times of Charles V. became the most predominant. "The Spanish and Italian ladies," says Brantome, "were always more curious and more expensive in perfumes and superb apparel than those of France, who have imitated their patterns and inventions."* In Germany and

* *Dames gal.* I. p. 263. "Surtout aussi celles d'Espagne et d'Italie, qui de tout temps en ont été plus

Italy, the Spanish fashions, of male as well as female dress, were preferred to any others*.

The prevalence, at least, the exclusive prevalence of the Spanish fashions, continued but a short time. About the middle of the sixteenth century, the court of France became the pattern of all other courts; and the French distinguished themselves as the nation whose cookery was held in the highest estimation, whose language was most universally spoken, and whose fashions in dress were most generally imitated by the rest of Europe. In Italy, the ladies retained some of the Spanish fashions even in the latter half of the sixteenth century; but the men dressed entirely in the French style; and in Germany, the French costume was so common, that, as Boeme informs us, there was scarcely a village in which it might not have been found†.

It may be generally asserted, that, in

curieuses et exquises que les nostres, tant en parfums qu'en parures de superbes habits, desquelles nos dames en ont pris depuis les patrons, et belles inventions."

* *Schmidt Geschichte der Deutschen*, VII. 137, 138. *Joh. Boeme de mor. Gent.* III. c. 18. In the German translation of 1604, p. 444.

† *Ibid.* and III. c. 22, p. 473.

more ancient times, the fashions of the men changed more frequently, and were communicated with greater rapidity, than those of the dress and ornaments of the other sex; because the men travelled more, and consequently saw, and were seen, more than their wives and daughters. This was the case as long as fashion was content to imitate foreign patterns without producing any new invention of its own. While the costume of France was imitated by the men in Germany, Italy, and other European countries, the French ladies still continued to copy foreign fashions. The beautiful Mary, queen of Scots, during her union with Francis II. dressed sometimes in the Scotch, and at others in the French, Spanish, and Italian style*. Even in the early part of the reign of Philip II. of Spain, the French females imitated the dress and ornaments of Christina of Denmark, duchess dowager of Lorraine, who resided at Philip's court in the Netherlands†; and in this dress, *à la*

* *Brantome Dames illust.* p. 117. "Que pouvoit elle donc paroistre se representant en ses belles et riches parures, fut à la Françoise, ou Espagnolle, ou avec le bonnet à l'Italienne."

† *Brantome Dames gal.* II. 97, 98. "Madame la duchesse de Lorraine, Christine de Dannemarck, donna à nos dames de France et aux siennes le patron et modele

Lorraine, the ladies appeared only at magnificent feasts and entertainments, when they were desirous of making a more splendid figure than usual.

The French court became the model of all the other courts, because Louis XII. Francis I. and Henry II. surpassed all the other kings and princes of christendom in the number and grandeur of their palaces, the splendour of their furniture and tables, the magnificence of their hunting-parties, and other diversions, but, above all, in the multitude, elegance, and accomplishments of the nobility of both sexes assembled at their courts. The ladies and gentlemen at the court of France were not separated by a rigid etiquette, as at the Spanish and Italian courts. They not only saw one another on grand gala-days, and other extraordinary occasions, but the intercourse of the sexes at the French court was equally free and uninterrupted. This continual and unobstructed association of the individuals of both sexes most distinguished for rank,

de s'habiller, qu'on appelloit à la Lorraine, pour la teste et pour la coiffure et le voile dont il faisoit fort beau voir nos dames de cour, et volontiers ne s'en accommodoient que les bonnes festes, ou grandes magnificences, pour mieux se parer, et se monstrer, et tout à la Lorraine, en imitation de son altesse."

wealth, and accomplishments, could not fail to excite an infinitely stronger desire to please than in more ancient times, when the knights and ladies met but seldom, and that only for a few days, at tournaments or other great festivals given by the court. The incessant desire of pleasing, naturally produced this effect, that both sexes endeavoured to distinguish themselves, sometimes by the magnificence, and at others by the beauty and novelty of the fashion of their dress. It was equally natural that the dress and ornaments which gained the greatest approbation at the most brilliant and the most polished court in Europe, should not only be admired by the capital and the rest of the kingdom, but also by other kingdoms and countries. The period, therefore, in which Anne of Bretagne, the consort of Louis XII. first formed her court of ladies*, and Francis I. and Henry II. gradually augmented its numbers and its splendour, this period, I say, was the epoch of the preponderance of the court of France over all the other European courts; and the continual residence of the

* *Brantome Dames illust.* p. 9. "Ce fut la premiere qui commença a dresser la cour des dames, que nous avons veues depuis elle jusqu' à cette heure."

females most distinguished for birth and beauty at the courts of the French monarchs, was the principal reason that the French court became the centre of taste, and the grand model of the fashions in dress for all Europe. The dominion of fashion in France commenced at a later period than the authority of the reigning house; but it established itself on a firmer foundation than the power of the latter. The throne of the kings is overturned, but Fashion still continues to reign from her temple at Paris over a great portion of Europe.

Under Louis XII. the general prosperity of the kingdom, and splendour in houses and furniture, in table utensils, in dress and ornaments, increased in an extraordinary degree*. I cannot, however, discover in the cotemporary historians any traces which would lead me to conclude, that the numerous company of ladies, whom Anne of Bretagne first assem-

* See the *Comparaison des Rois Louis XI. et XII.* in the second volume of the *Histoire de Comines par Lenglet du Fresnoy*, p. 299, 300. "Neantmoins a tenu tels moyens que son royaume est beaucoup plus riche d'argent et de toutes choses qu'il ne fût jamais du temps dudit roy Loüys, ni auparavant. . . aussi sont les habillemens et la maniere de vivre plus somptueux, que jamais on ne les vit."

bled at her court, had any remarkable influence on the splendour and variety of dresses and ornaments.

Under Francis I. the magnificence of the court in general, and in dress in particular, increased rapidly, and many degrees, among both sexes. On occasion of great festivities, the king was accustomed to present many of the ladies with splendid dresses; and Brantome informs us, that in his time he had seen large wardrobes of rich apparel, the gifts of Francis I. to different ladies*. Francis broke all the fetters of etiquette, and even of decorum, which had till then imposed restraint on the intercourse between the sexes, or prevented the participation in the diversions of the court. Widows were not allowed to decline dancing; they might chuse any colour or stuff they pleased for their under-garments, and even wear robes of a rose or chamois co-

* *Hommes illust.* I. p. 267. "Il n'y avoit nopces grandes, qui se fissent en cour, qui ne fussent solemnisées ou de tournois, ou de combats, ou de mascarades, ou d'habillemens fort riches tant d'hommes que des dames lesquelles en avoient de lui grandes livrées. J'ay veu de coffres et garderobes d'aucunes dames de ce temps-là si pleines de robes que le roy leur avoit données en telles magnificences, et festes, que c'estoit une très grande richesse."

lour*. Pearls and precious stones were still very scarce at the time of Francis I.; the ornaments of the ladies, therefore, principally consisted of gold chains, necklaces, and bracelets, on which were engraven amorous or sentimental devices. After the return of the king from his captivity in Spain, his new mistress, Madame d'Estampes, persuaded him to demand back the pledges of love and jewels with which he had presented her predecessor. Francis was weak enough to comply with this ungenerous request, and sent a gentleman, who had attended his former mistress, to make the requisition. The incensed lady returned for answer, that she was prevented by indisposition from collecting immediately the presents she had received from the king, and desired the cavalier to return in three days. In the

† *Brantome Dames gal.* II. p. 114. "J'ouys dire à la reyne mere du roy au sacre et aux nopces du roy Henry Troisiesme, mesme chose, que les vefves du temps passé n'avoient si grand esgard à leurs habits, modestie ny actions, comme aujourdhuy: ainsi comme elle avoit veu du temps du roy François qui vouloit sa cour libre en tout, et mesme que les vefves y dansoient... Aucunes ay-je veu, qui se sont emancipées sur le rouge incarnat et couleur chamois, ainsi que le temps passé; car elles pouvoient porter toutes couleurs en leurs cottes et bas de chausses, non en robes, ainsi que j'ay ouy dire."

mean time, she sent all the jewels with which the king had presented her to a goldsmith, with directions to melt them down into bars. When the cavalier called, according to appointment, the lady gave him the bars of gold, and charged him to deliver this message: "that, as the king had thought fit to demand back the presents he had made her, she had sent them back in a mass, without the least deduction. With respect to the mottos inscribed on these presents, she had deeply engraven them on her heart, and set so great a value upon them, that she could not share the use or the possession of them with any other person." Francis, so far from being offended with this answer, immediately ordered the bars of gold to be returned to his former mistress*. Pearls and precious stones, as well as jewels of gold and silver, became so common during the sixteenth century, that in Brantome's time many private individuals in Spain and Portugal possessed

* *Brantome Dames gal.* II. p. 395, 6. "Car pour lors les pierreries n'avoient la vogue qu'elles ont eu depuis, mais pour l'amour des belles devises qui estoient mises, engravées et empreintes lesquelles, la reyne de Navarre sa soeur avoient faites et composées."

a greater store of them than the coffers of the kings of France had formerly contained.*

During the reign of Francis I. the gentlemen and ladies endeavoured to distinguish themselves, rather by the richness and number of their dresses, than by novelty and variety in the fashions of their apparel. The short jackets, the high sugar-loaf caps, or *birettes*, and the long sharp-pointed shoes, which were in fashion, in 1467, in Burgundy and France,† continued in vogue at the time of Celtes, the poet, and Sabellius, and were imitated in Germany and Italy, as the French costume. The female fashions, which likewise originated about the year 1467, maintained their ground nearly the same length of time. The ladies then wore caps and long veils that reached almost to their heels; broad girdles; valuable furs, with

* *Œuvres de Brantome, Illustr. Etrangers*, IV. p. 39, 41.

† *Chronique scandaleuse de Louis* XI. p. 189. "Les hommes se prirent à se vestir plus court que oncque mais ils avoient fait; si qu'on voyoit leurs derrieres et leurs devant, ainsi comme on vouloit vestir les singes, et se mirent à porter si longs cheveux, qu'ils leur empeschoient le visage et les yeux; de plus ils portoient de hauts bonnets sur leurs testes, et des souliers à trop longues poulaines."

which their garments were bordered or lined; and broad rich laces that had usurped the place of the long trains of former times.* Mary, queen of Scots, wore long white veils after the death of her first husband, Francis II.† and the dress in which Catharine de Medicis was painted in her youth, bore a great resemblance to the costume described above.‡ As there was so little variation in the fashions in the first half of the sixteenth century, the ladies preserved their rich dresses for such a length of time, that Brantome saw and admired many wardrobes, collected during the reign of Francis I. Even the form of their ornaments underwent very little alteration; otherwise how could Brantome have said, that the French ladies used the head-dress *à la Lorraine*, only on extraordinary occasions? Towards the conclusion of the fifteenth century, luxury in dress was carried to such a pitch, at least in the Burgundian

* *Chronique scandaleuse de Louis* XI. p. 189.

† *Brantome Dames illust.* p. 117.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 44. "Nous y vismes cette reyne paroistre peinte tres bien en sa beauté et en sa perfection, habillée a la Françoise d'un chapperon avec ses grosses perles, et une robe à grandes manches de toiles d'argent fourrées de loup cerviers."

dominions, that, even persons of low condition, and the servants of people of quality, wore dresses of silk or velvet.* It is, therefore, the more suprizing, that Francis I. was offended with the constable de Bourbon, because, at the christening of his son, he had clothed five hundred gentlemen in velvet, and presented to each a triple chain of gold to wear about his neck.†

Under Henry II. not only the common soldiers, but the officers and gentlemen, wore pantaloons without stockings.‡ I am not certain whether the great alteration in the dress of the men, of which Sabellius makes mention, took place in the latter years of the reign of Henry II. or soon after his death. During the life-time of the above writer, the coat was lengthen-

* *Chron. scandal.* as above. "Les valets mesmement à l'imitation des maîtres et les petites gens indifferemment portoient de pourpoints de soye ou de velours, choses trop vaines et sans doute haineuses à Dieu."

† *Œuvres de Brantome, Illust. Estrang.* IV. p. 281.

‡ *Carloix Mém. du Marech. de Vieilleville,* IV. p. 325. "car en ce temps la (1552) toutes qualitez de gens, j'entends de gentilshommes, de gens de guerre et des honnestes hommes et d'estat de villes portoient les chausses entieres, le hault tenant au bas; et ne parloit on lors de gregues, ny de provensalles, que ne sont venus en usaige que depuis le bas de soye, raz de Millan, d'estame ont eu le cours et la vogue en ce royaume."

ed to such a degree as to reach half-way down the leg. The shoes lost their points, and were made extremely broad at the toes. The high sugar-loaf caps dwindled into wide low scarlet hats.* Catharine de Medicis, the consort of Henry II. not only wore superb apparel, but invented many new and pleasing fashions, for the embellishment of her dress and decorations.† The same princess was anxious that her ladies should appear richly attired, when strangers of distinction visited the court.‡ The duchess de Valentinois, the mistress of Henry II. introduced, during her widowhood, a more modest dress for widows. She wore nothing but white or black silk, taking care, however, not to conceal her beautiful neck.§ This mourning

* *Apud Boeme.* III. c. 22. p. 472, 3.

† *Brantome Dames illust,* p. 44. "De plus elle s'habilloit tousjours fort bien et superbement et avoit tousjours quelque gentille et nouvelle invention." The inventions of queen Catharine de Medicis could not, however, have been of much consequence, since not a single one of them is circumstantially described.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 89.

§ *Brantome Dames gal.* II. p. 113. "De ce temps les vefves n'estoient si resserrés ny si reformées en leurs habits comme elles l'ont esté de quelques 40 ans, qu'une grande dame que je sçay, laquelle estant fort aux bonnes graces d'un roy, voire en delices, s'habilla un peu plus à la modeste; mais de soye pourtant tousjours, afin qu'elle pût

was in vogue forty years, and perhaps still longer at the court of France. The duchess de Valentinois and Madame d'Aumont never used paint; but yet the practice of painting seems to have been more common under Henry II. than the reliance which the mistress of that monarch placed in her natural charms.*

The first authors of the variations of fashion in dress, were the two beautiful daughters of Catharine de Medicis, Elizabeth, who afterwards became the wife of Philip II. of Spain, and Margaret, who was married in 1572, to Henry IV. then king of Navarre, and divorced from him in 1599, after he had ascended the throne of France. Both these princesses strove to heighten their charms by the richness and magnificence of their apparel, and the elegance of their ornaments. As Elizabeth was removed in the flower of her beauty to the gloomy court of Spain, and subjected to the restrictions of its rigid

mieux couvrir et cacher son jeu: et par ainsi les vefves de la cour la voulant imiter, en faisoient de mesme qu'elle. Si ne se reformoit-elle point tant, ny si à l'austerité qu'elle ne s'habillast gentiment et pompeusement, mais tout de noir et blanc, et y paroissoit plus de mondanité que de reformation, et surtout monstroit tousjours sa belle gorge."

* *Brantome Dames gal.* II. p. 229, 30. "Le fard commum, pratiqué de plusieurs dames luy estoit inconnu."

etiquette, she was not long allowed to indulge her propensity and her genius for the invention of new fashions. Her dress and ornaments were equally elegant and superb.* Her mode of dressing her hair was sometimes imitated even by her ingenious sister. As she could not vary the fashion of her dress so often as she pleased in Spain, she made amends for this restraint, by continually changing her apparel itself. She never wore any of her dresses a second time, though the most ordinary of them cost no less than three or four hundred crowns.†

By her genius for the invention of new fashions, Margaret of Navarre reigned over her own sex with the same unlimited power as her beauty gave her over the other. To her alone it was owing, that the French ladies excelled the females of all other nations in their dress and ornaments.‡ The

* *Brantome Dames illust.* p. 196, 7. "Elle s'habilloit très-bien et fort pompeusement, et ses habillemens lúy seoient tres-bien entre autres les manches fendües avec de fers, qu'on appelle en Espagne *puntas*."

† *Ibid.* p. 197. "Elle ne porta jamais une robe deux fois, et puis la donnoit a ses femmes et ses filles; et Dieu sçait quelles robes si riches et si superbes, que la moindre estoit de trois à quatre cens escus."

‡ *Brantome Dames gal.* I. p. 264. "Mais aujourd'huy nos dames Françoises surpassent tout: mais à la reyne de Navarre elle en doivent ce grand mercy."

services performed by queen Margaret of Navarre, for the empire of fashion, will be most clearly elucidated, by the following passage from Brantome, which I shall introduce in a free translation, to the notice of the reader.*

" The dress and ornaments of ancient times were not to be compared with the superb and elegant fashions invented by queen Margaret. While our ladies took the queen for their pattern, in attire and ornaments, they had much more of the air of females of distinction than before, and at the same time they were infinitely more lovely. When the queen-mother was conducting her daughter to the king of Navarre, she passed through Coignac, where she reposed for a few days. All the ladies of the environs paid their respects to the queen. They were all transported with the beauty of her daughter; they could not sufficiently feast their eyes on the royal bride, or find language strong enough to express their admiration. The overjoyed mother desired her daughter to attire herself for once, out of respect to these ladies, in all her splendor. She complied, and appeared in a robe of silver-

* *Dames illust.* p. 211, &c.

stuff, with wide sleeves, and wore over her hair, richly ornamented with jewels, a white veil, neither too large nor too small. The apparel and the head-dress of the illustrious princess imparted such majesty, and at the same time, such charms to her person, that you would rather have taken her for a goddess from heaven, than for a being of terrestrial origin. The ladies were struck dumb with amazement, and the queen-mother herself could not forbear observing, that her daughter had attired herself with exquisite elegance and taste. "I shall only wear my dress for a short time," replied the latter; "for if ever I return to the court of France, I must not carry my clothes back with me, but I must provide myself with handsome stuffs, that I may dress according to the latest fashions." "Why do you talk thus, my dear daughter?" answered her mother. "It is yourself who invent all the elegant fashions. Go whithersoever you please, still the court will continue to copy you." This prediction was actually accomplished. On her return, nothing was thought fashionable but what was worn by queen Margaret.

"Whether this beautiful queen appeared in a hat, a cap, or a veil, it was impos-

sible to determine in what head-dress she looked the most charming. She embellished every thing she wore by some new inventions, and when other females imitated the same thing, it did not become them near so well, as I have a thousand times had occasion to observe. I saw her in general in a robe of white satin, with a rich border, and a gauze veil carelessly thrown over her head. Others may praise the goddesses and the empresses of antiquity as much as they please, compared with our queen, they would have looked like common servant maids.

The courtiers had frequent disputes respecting what dress best became her. Some decided in favour of one and some of another. For my part, I never beheld her more enchanting, than at an entertainment given at the Tuileries, by the queen-mother to the Polish ambassador. On that day, queen Margaret wore a robe of flesh-coloured Spanish velvet, richly decorated with spangles,* and a bonnet of the same velvet, profusely embellished with precious stones and feathers. As she was more admired in this dress than ever she had been before, she frequently wore

* "Fort chargée de clinquant." p. 215.

it in the sequel, and even sat in it for her portrait; and this picture is the best that ever was painted of this queen.

"I saw the beautiful queen during the first assembly of the states at Blois, the very same day on which the king, her brother, made his speech. On that occasion, she wore a black dress, with orange-coloured stripes and flowers, and her great majestic veil. Such was the impression made by her upon all present, that I have heard more than three hundred persons acknowledge, that they were so absorbed in the contemplation of the celestial beauties of the queen, as to take no notice of the excellent oration of the monarch. Sometimes she wore her own black hair, which she dressed with great taste in many different ways, after the example of her sister, the queen of Spain. In general, however, she wore elegant wigs of artificial hair.*

"I should never finish, were I to attempt to enumerate all the charming fashions which she invented. Often as she changed these fashions, she never covered her beautiful neck and bosom, of the sight

* "Pourtant elle ne s'y plaisoit gueres, et peu souvent s'en accommodoit, si non de perruques bien gentiment façonnez."

of which she could not resolve to deprive the world. Most of the courtiers had nearly pined to death, of the languishing desire excited by that white, that full and lovely bosom. Even many of the ladies familiar with the queen, were so fascinated by it, that they could not resist the temptation of kissing this master-piece of Nature.

" Queen Margaret seldom wore a mask, which the ladies of the court were, at that time, accustomed to do. She once walked with her face uncovered, in the procession held on Palm-Sunday, at Blois. Her beautiful hair, sparkled with such a profusion of pearls and brilliant diamonds, that it seemed as though she might have vied in splendour with the star-bespangled heavens. Her tall and stately figure was set off by a robe of the richest cloth of gold that had ever been seen in France. It had been given by the Grand Signior to M. de Grandchamp, who, on his return home, had presented it to the sister of the king. The fair princess would have sunk beneath the weight of this garment, every yard of which had cost one hundred crowns, had she not been so tall and strong as she was. She wore it the whole day, and, during the procession, she carried a palm-branch

with such dignity and grace, that we were all disturbed in our devotions. We thought it no sin to pay more attention to the fascinating princess than to the exercises of religion. If we contemplate and admire a terrestrial divinity, the God of Heaven cannot be angry with us for so doing, since it was he himself who created the former."

The era of the greatest number, and the most important changes and improvements made by queen Margaret, in the fashions of the dress of her sex, was the reign of Henry III. who was a much more zealous votary of fashion than his sister, but was as far surpassed by her in respect to taste. The particulars concerning the dress of Henry and his minions given in the celebrated satire on that monarch, entitled *L'Isle des Hermaphrodites*, are no exaggeration. "Every one," it is said, in the pretended ordinances of the inhabitants of the island of the Hermaphrodites,* "may dress as he pleases, provided it be with magnificence, and without regard to rank and fortune. Let the stuff of which a garment is made be ever so rich, it must be farther embellished with embroidery in

* *Journal de Henri III.* Vol. IV. p. 79.

gold and silver, pearls and precious stones: otherwise we declare such a garment unfit to be worn in good company. The more effeminate are the fashion and the ornaments of dress, the more beautiful and the more consistent with our manners do we deem them. They must, however, be changed every month. Whoever wears a coat for a longer time shall be accounted a tasteless, sordid and niggardly fellow. Every person has the liberty of reviving and announcing as new, fashions which were in vogue sixty or eighty years ago. In order to facilitate the necessary alterations, and the discovery of new improvements, we exhort our friends to engage among their attendants a skilful and intelligent tailor, with whose assistance they may contrive, and make trial of new patterns. Besides the great advantage resulting from such a measure, they would derive the essential benefit of gradually learning many technical expressions, and thus acquire the means of entertaining themselves in a solid and agreeable manner with the ladies, or with persons of their own description."

The favourite occupations of Henry III. consisted in dressing his own and the queen's hair, and in starching and plaiting his own ruff and that of his consort.

These employments took up so much of his time on the day of his coronation, and afterwards on that of his nuptials, that the procession could not repair to the church before six o'clock, and the lateness of the mass caused the *Te Deum* to be forgotten to be sung.* At balls and other diversions he appeared habited as an Amazon, in female attire, with his bosom uncovered, and a collar of pearls hanging down upon his breast. He wore besides, like the ladies of his court, a small *toque*, over which he himself frizzed his hair, three bands of fine linen, two of which were plaited into ruffs, and the other inverted.† These bands occasioned the remark, that his head resembled that of John the Baptist presented to king Herod upon a charger.‡ When Sully

* *Journal de Henri III.* T. I. p. 179, 180. As early as the year 1576, appeared a *placard*, in which the following epithets were applied, among others, to Henry III. *Gauderonneur des colets de sa femme, et Friseur de ses cheveux, Mercier du palais*, &c. The latter appellation was given him because one of his greatest pleasures consisted in looking at his jewels, in changing them, and having them reset.

† *Ibid.* p. 183, 203. "Cependant faisoit ballets et tournois, ou il se trouvoit ordinairement habillé en femme, ouvrant son pourpoint et decouvrant sa gorge, y portant un collier de perles, et trois collets de toile, deux a fraizes et un renversé, ainsi que les portoient les dames de la cour."

‡ *Ibid.* I. p. 180.

was admitted to an interview with him in 1586, he had a *toque* on his head, a tippet on his shoulders, and a broad ribbon round his neck, from which was suspended a basket full of puppies.* As he himself assumed the female attire, so also he enjoined the ladies to adopt the dress of men. They were obliged to obey, and attended at a grand entertainment in male apparel, made of damask of two different colours.† Notwithstanding all these unnatural follies, many of the regulations introduced by Henry III. into the the etiquette of the court, continued for a considerable time after his death. He made the dresses, worn on extraordinary occasions by the members of the parliament, much more splendid than they had ever been before.‡ He set the first example of mourning in black, on the death of his brother; the kings of France having previously been accustomed to mourn in violet-coloured clothes. § The ladies mourned for husbands and lovers in brown

* *Sully Mém.* I. p. 103. "une cape sur les epaules, une petite toque sur la tête, un panier plein de petits chiens pendu a son cou par un large ruban."

† *Journ. de Henri III.* I. p. 205.

‡ *Pasquier Œuvres*, II. p, 414,

§ *Busbequii Epist. in ips. oper.* p. 446. "cum antea violacei coloris vestitu lugere regibus mos fuerit."

apparel, with death's heads or floods of tears painted or wrought in gold on their collars or bracelets.* By way of second mourning, they exchanged the death's heads and bones for small portraits of the deceased, which they wore at their breasts, but which were still surrounded with representations of showers of tears.

During the greatest part of the sixteenth century, the ladies of France, like those of other countries, wore either long drawers, which covered the whole leg and thigh quite to the hip, or short ones, that reached only to the knee; and in this latter case, stockings, or, as they were denominated, *chausses* or *bas de chausses*, were worn upon the legs.† The drawers

* *Brantome Dames Gal.* I. p. 124. II p. 137.

† There was a period, but, as it would appear, a very short one, during which the ladies wore no drawers. *Brantome Dames gal* "Car pour lors elles ne portoient point de calçons." Brantome distinguishes five principal parts of wearing apparel; *la robe*, or the upper garment, *la juppe*, *le cotillon*, *les chausses*, which he also calls *bas de chausses*, or *chaussure*, and the *calçons*. *Dames gal.* I. p. 321, 2. II. p. 114. He also makes a distinction between the *chausse* and the *bas de soye*, I. p. 325, 343. Respecting the antiquity and general use of long knitted stockings in England, in the sixteenth century, I find an interesting passage, copied from the Preface of *Queen Elizabeth's Progresses*, in *Sir F. M. Eden's State of the Poor*, I. p. 71.

were made of cloth of gold and silver,* or other rich stuffs; the *chausses*, or *chaussure*, of coloured silks, or *filet de Florence*.† Whether the *chausses* were of silk or *filet*, the ladies made a point of drawing them as tight as the parchment of a drum.‡ To prevent these *chausses* from relaxing, they were fastened with elegant garters or pins.§ The *chausses de soye* were frequently worn even after silk stockings began to be common, at least among persons of quality.‖ Well-grown ladies wore

* "Mais pour en faire parade quelques fois avec de beaux calçous de toile d'or ou d'argent et autres etoffes, tres proprement et mignonnement faits." *Dames gal.* I. p. 322.

† *Ibid.* p. 327.---"d'une belle chaussure de soye de couleur ou de filet blanc, comme l'on fait à Florence pour porter l'esté dont j'ay veu d'autres fois nos dames en porter, avant le grand usage que nous avons eu depuis de chausses de soye." The passage relating to the *filet blanc* is worthy of notice. Compare *Beckmann's History of Inventions*, Part II. § 1. Note 1.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 322, 327. Female servants could not possess a stronger recommendation to the favour of their mistresses, than proficiency in the art of putting on their *chaussure*.

§ *Ibid.* p. 327.

‖ In 1552, the use of what we call stockings for men was still unknown. See the passage from Carloix, quoted in a preceding page. When Henry II. first introduced silk stockings in France, it must have been subsequent to that date. Under Henry III. it was a piece of gallantry for gentlemen to request ladies to wear their new silk stockings several times, before they put them on themselves. *Dames gal.* I. p. 325. At the coronation of

neat shoes of velvet or other stuffs, with very low heels; but females of short stature wore shoes with heels, or rather clogs of cork, which were a foot, and even two feet in height*. The fashionable long garments were very favourable to short ladies, because they prevented their enormous *patins* from being seen†. The ladies fastened feathers of different kinds in their hats and caps. Queen Margaret first ventured to place them in such a manner as to incline over the forehead. A lady of the court having imitated this fashion,

Henry III. white silk stockings were worn by the ladies. *Ibid.* I. p. 343. Respecting the origin of the practice of wearing stockings in England, see *Eden*, I. p. 70, 71. In 1591, a pair of silk stockings cost in that country one pound eighteen shillings.

* *Dames gal.* I. 327. "Et puis faut accompagner le pied d'un bel escarpin blanc, et d'une mule de velours noir ou d'autre couleur, ou bien d'un beau petit patin tant bien fait que rien plus. . . Mais ces petits escarpins sont pour les grandes et hautes femmes; car ils ne sont propres pour les courtaudes et nabottes, qui ont leurs grands chevaux et patins liegez de deux pieds, autant voudroit remuer cela, comme la masse d'un geant ou la marotte d'un fou." In Germany, the high *patins* were called *stelzenschuhe*, (stilt-shoes.)

† "Remerciez," said a lady of high rank to one of her attendants, who was of very low stature, "la saison et les robbes longues que nous portons qui vous favorisent beaucoup, et qui vous couvrent vos jambes si dextrement qu'elles ressemblent avec vos grands et haut patins d'un pied de hauteur plustot une massüe qu'une jambe."

Henry III. sent her word, that the next time she appeared in that manner, he would order a German flute to be handed to her. At that time great numbers of wretched daubings were brought from Flanders, in which were represented feathered female musicians, with flutes at their mouths. Notwithstanding this expression of the king, the practice of wearing feathers that overhung the forehead gained ground, and afterwards became extremely common.*

Henry IV. was too great a man to set much value on splendid apparel and ornaments for his person; he chose rather to adorn himself with the unobtrusive but glorious memorials of his victories, than the finery with which tailors and embroiderers could furnish him. But, though Henry IV. was much less particular in the

* *Brantome*, I. p. 328, 329. "Voila pourquoy il n'est bienseant qu'une femme se garçonne pour se faire monstrer plus belle, si ce n'est pour se gentiment adoniser d'un beau bonnet, avec la plume attachée à la Guelfe ou Gibelline, ou bien au devant du front pour ne trancher ny de l'un ny de l'autre, comme depuis peu de temps nos dames d'aujourdhuy se sont mises en vogue; mais pourtant à toutes il ne sied pas bien; il faut en avoir le visage poupin et fait exprès, ainsi qu'on a veu à nostre reyne de Navarre, qui s'en accommodoit si bien, qu'à voir le visage seulement adonisé, on n'eut sçeu juger de quel sexe elle tranchoit."

choice of his attire than his predecessors, yet greater magnificence was displayed in dress, and the fashions changed more frequently during his reign than in that of the frivolous Henry III. Henry IV. was fond of women, and took delight in seeing his fair mistresses attired with the utmost elegance and splendour.* He moreover loved, not merely for the sake of the women, brilliant entertainments and diversions, which were never so frequent at the French court as during his reign.† Under no preceding monarch was there such an assemblage of youth and beauty of both sexes at the court of France, as under Henry IV. In his time, a class of men first sprung up at the French court, whose only, or at least, whose principal occupation was, to seduce females, but who also made a point of continually entertaining the ladies whom they had debauched, or designed to debauch, and of procuring them every imaginable amuse-

* He found fault, for instance, with the fair Gabrielle, then marquise de Liancourt, for not having diamonds enough in her hair at the christening of a son of the constable de Montmorency. She had but twelve, and in Henry's opinion she ought to have had fifteen. *Journ. de Henri IV.* Tom. II. p. 337.

† *Ibid*, p. 266, 7.

ment.* Under these circumstances, it cannot be surprising if gentlemen and ladies vied with each other in the richness of the stuffs, and the ornaments of their dress, and in the elegance and novelty of the fashions. Etoile, the author of the Journal of Henry IV. saw, at an embroiderer's at Paris, a piece of cloth, for which Madame de Liancourt was to give nineteen hundred crowns.† Pearls and precious stones were frequently attached to the toes or the front of shoes.‡ Previous to the christening of the dauphin, all the tailors and embroiderers in Paris were so busy, that the marshal de Bassompierre had great difficulty to find one who would undertake to execute his order. At length, his regular tailor and embroiderer offered to make him a suit which should eclipse all Paris, if he chose to go to the price. They both informed him that a dealer from the Netherlands had just arrived with a horse-load of pearls, and that he ought to lose no time in procuring the necessary quantity. The mar-

* *Bassompiere Mémoires*, I. p. 168, 171. They were at that time known by the appellation of *les dangereux*.

† *Ibid.* p. 133.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 267.

shal chose for his superb dress a violet-coloured cloth of gold, with palm-branches entwining each other.* He purchased fifty pounds weight of pearls to adorn this suit, which cost in the whole fourteen thousand crowns, the embroidery alone amounting to sixteen hundred. Among *les dangereux*, Bassompierre was one of the most dangerous; and yet so transient was his reputation for gallantry and taste, that in his old age he became the laughing-stock of the young.† During the reign of Henry IV. persons of both sexes wore masks, not only in their excursions abroad, but also when they paid visits to each other. The fair Gabrielle took off her mask to allow Aubigné, the friend of Henry IV. the honour of a kiss.‡ The same lady removed the mask of her royal lover wherever he went, that she might salute him.§ The character of the Germans for intoxication, threw such a shade over the fair sex in that country, that Henry IV. could not endure the

* *Mém.* I. p. 163. "Je voulus qu'il fust de toile d'or violette, et de palmes que s'entrelasseroient."

† *Mém. de Motteville*, I. p. 376, 7.

‡ *Mém. d'Aubigné*, p. 135.

§ *Journ. de Henri IV.* II. p. 133.

thought of marrying a German princess, observing, that he should always fancy he had a pipe of wine in bed with him.*

The journals and memoirs of the reign of Louis XIII. and the regency of queen Anne of Austria, afford less information respecting the change of the predominant fashions, than the monuments of the sixteenth century. The inference which, in my opinion, should be drawn from this is, that luxury in dress rather diminished than increased during that period. I have great doubt whether any lady at the court of Louis XIII. expended, on the minor articles of the toilette, as much as the celebrated friend of Ninon de l'Enclos, Manion de Lormes, to whom the great cardinal Richelieu paid his addresses; if, however, what we are told of her be true, that in one year she ran up a bill of fifty thousand crowns for her lover Emeri with one single perfumer, for gloves, fans, pomatum, essences, and other perfumes.† Anne

* *Mém. de Sully*, I. p. 522. "Je croirois toujours avoir un lot de vin auprès de moi."

† *Galanter des Rois de France*, III. p. 149, 150. "Qui fit pour gagner ses affections des depenses si extraordinaires, qu'ayant voulu arrêter les parties de Martial, fameux parfumeur, chez qui cette fille se fournissoit de gands, d'eventails, de pommades, d'essences, et d'autres parfums, il trouva qu'elle en avoit pris dans un an pour cinquante mille ecus."

of Austria, after the death of her consort, relinquished the use of *rouge*, and the ladies of the court could not help following the example of the queen.*

At the period of the marriage of Louis XIV. with the infanta of Spain, the French courtiers wore very short and close, but richly-embroidered coats, or rather jackets, and prodigious breeches, with which the extravagant size of the bows of ribbons at the knees perfectly corresponded.† The dress of the Spanish courtiers was without embroidery, but was adorned with a profusion of precious stones. In Madame de Motteville's opinion, the breeches of the Spaniards were as much too narrow, as those of the French were remarkable for the contrary extreme.‡

* *Motteville*, I. p. 221.

† *Ibid.* V. p. 87. "Comme je trouvois alors les habits des François ridicules avec des larges escanons qu'ils portoient aux jambes, et que je trouvois à redire à leurs petits pourpoints, qui ne leur couvroient ni le corps ni l'estomac."

‡ *Ibid.* V. p. 91, 92.

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